November 20, 2006 49145 $3.95 U.S., $4.95 Canadian

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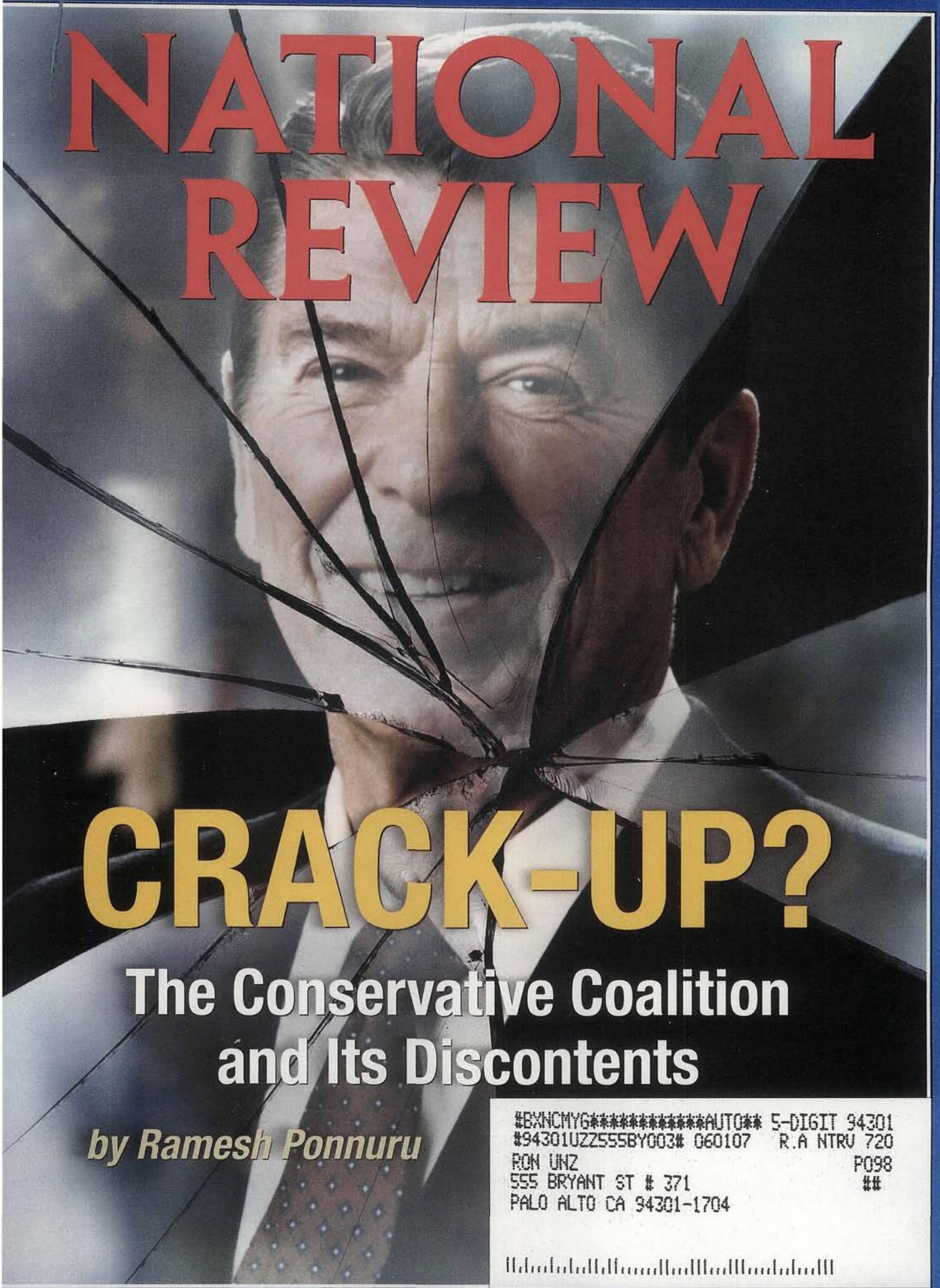

CRACK-UP?

The Conservative Coalition and Its Discontents

by Ramesh Ponnuru

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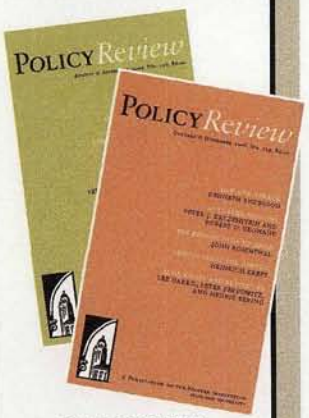

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Law and Terror

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—Kenneth Anderson

Anti-Americanisms

Biases as diverse as the country itself

If a society veers toward secularism, as much of Europe has, American religiosity is likely to become salient—odd, disturbing, and, because of American power, vaguely threatening. How can a people who believe more strongly in the Virgin Birth than in the theory of evolution be trusted to lead an alliance of liberal societies? If a society adopts fervently Islamic religious doctrine and practices, as has occurred throughout much of the Islamic world during the past quarter century, the prominence of women in American society and the vulgarity and emphasis on sexuality that pervade much of American popular culture are likely to evoke loathing, even fear. Thus, anti-Americanism is closely linked to the polyvalence of American society.

—Peter J. Katzenstein and Robert O. Keohane

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NATIONAL REVIEW

NOVEMBER 20, 2006 VOL. LVIII, NO. 21

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■ COVER STORY

Conservatives On the Couch

Conservatism is in crisis. Everyone is saying so, and everyone is right. But the nature of the crisis, its causes and possible solutions, is badly misunderstood.

By Ramesh Ponnuru

ARTICLES

17 Obama Madness *by Byron York*
Is the junior Illinois senator the Democrats' savior?

18 Bush's Vietnam Syndrome *by Richard Lowry*
The president draws a wrong lesson.

22 A Bicentennial, Blown? *by John J. Miller*
The question of Lincoln and 2009.

24 Veiled Threat *by Theodore Dalrymple*
Why it may be important to see a woman's face.

26 Bloody Nonsense *by Jack Jolis*
When diamonds are a propagandist's best friend.

30 The Thatcherites *by John O'Sullivan*
Or, as they would have said, the IEA-ites.

32 Conservatives on the Couch *by Ramesh Ponnuru*
A diagnosis.

35 No Substitute for Victory *by David B. Rivkin Jr.*
As goes the Iraq War, so go many things.

COVER: *Bettmann/Corbis*

BOOKS, ARTS & MANNERS

41 Sulky Sullivan—*Jonah Goldberg* . . . The Conservative Soul: How We Lost It, How to Get It Back, *by Andrew Sullivan*

44 Before Quag Met Mire—*James S. Robbins* . . . Triumph Forsaken: The Vietnam War, 1954–1965, *by Mark Moyar*

47 The Wise Man—*Michael Knox Beran* . . . Dean Acheson: A Life in the Cold War, *by Robert L. Beisner*

49 Music: Working Classical—Jay Nordlinger glances at three contemporary composers, one a Beatle.

50 Film: Saint Clint—Ross Douthat reviews *Flags of Our Fathers*.

52 Country Life: Straight Shooting—The hunt is on, and off, for Richard Brookhiser.

SECTIONS

2 Letters
4 The Week
39 Help!
40 The Long View
50 Poetry
54 On the Right
56 Happy Warrior

NATIONAL REVIEW (ISSN: 0028-0038) is published bi-weekly, except for the first issue in January, by NATIONAL REVIEW, Inc., at 215 Lexington Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016. Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y., and additional mailing offices. ©National Review, Inc., 2006. Address all editorial mail, manuscripts, letters to the editor, etc., to Editorial Dept., NATIONAL REVIEW, 215 Lexington Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016. Address all subscription mail orders, changes of address, undeliverable copies, etc., to NATIONAL REVIEW, Circulation Dept., P. O. Box 668, Mount Morris, Ill. 61054-0668; phone, 815-734-1232, Monday–Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 10:30 P.M. Eastern time. Adjustment requests should be accompanied by a current mailing label or facsimile. Direct classified advertising inquiries to: Classifieds Dept., NATIONAL REVIEW, 215 Lexington Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016 or call 212-679-7330. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to NATIONAL REVIEW, Circulation Dept., P. O. Box 668, Mount Morris, Ill. 61054-0668. Printed in the U.S.A.

RATES: $59.00 a year (24 issues). Add $21.50 for Canada and other foreign subscriptions, per year. (All payments in U.S. currency.) The editors cannot be responsible for unsolicited manuscripts or artwork unless return postage or, better, a stamped self-addressed envelope is enclosed. Opinions expressed in signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of the editors.

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November 20 issue; printed November 2

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MAIN NUMBER 212-679-7330
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WASHINGTON OFFICE 202-543-9226

ADVERTISING SALES 212-679-7330
Executive Publisher Scott F. Budd
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letters to the editor

PICKING A NIT

In "Births 'n' Dearths" (Oct. 23), Mark Steyn claims that "a society ages when its birthrate falls and it finds itself with fewer children and more grandparents." But this is a strange way to put it. If there are fewer children being born, this is probably due at least in part to an increase in childless couples. And when more couples remain childless, fewer of their parents will become grandparents. So it seems that an aging society will have both fewer children and fewer grandparents. I think what Steyn meant to write is that a society ages when its birthrate falls and it finds itself with fewer children and proportionately more old people.

Barton L. Ingraham
San Jacinto, Calif.

LIFE IN A LOUDSPEAKER

In "The War Upon Us" (Sept. 25), Richard Brookhiser maintains that the U.S. government must do all it can to "introduce the vexing institution of journalism into the Middle East," on the grounds that it will allay Islamic hatred of the West. While I agree that it is imperative to somehow generate pro-American sentiment in the Muslim world, there is a telling degree of idealism in his argument. Promoting a free press for its own sake is one thing, but in a region whose average person "lives in a loudspeaker that tells him what he wants to hear or what his masters want him to hear," we run the risk that a free press will simply enable the anti-American majority to disseminate its hatred even more effectively.

Anthony Ferguson
Represa, Calif.

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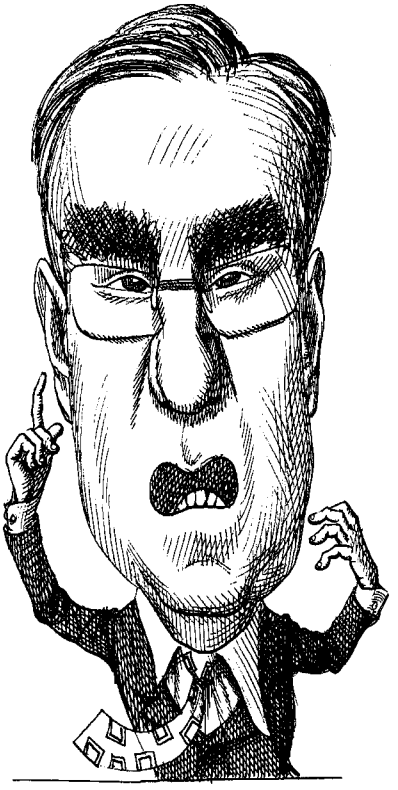
A MISTER-Y

Stephen Spruiell has asserted that Keith Olbermann's "insistence on calling the president 'Mr. Bush' instead of 'President Bush' is his way of saying that Bush holds office illegitimately" ("Oh, Olby!" Nov. 6). Given that Spruiell purports to have determined why Olbermann refers to the president as "Mr. Bush," I wonder if he has determined why NR founder William F. Buckley Jr. refers to the president in the same manner.

Kevin E. Foley
Via e-mail



STEPHEN SPRUIELL RESPONDS: Lots of people refer to the president as "Mr. Bush" sometimes, myself included. But WFB does not make the reference with the sneering contempt that Olbermann does, and neither do I. Nor did we spend weeks after the 2004 election recycling bizarre allegations of voter fraud from left-wing fringe websites. In other words, we have not given people good reason to think that we harbor an angry suspicion that the president holds his office illegitimately.

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THE WEEK

■ If the first Bush was "born with a silver foot in his mouth," did Senator Kerry acquire one when he married Teresa?

■ The White House has now completed a repudiation of its "stay the course" rhetoric—a repudiation that began, fitfully, months ago. Since no one—not even hawks—has much interest in staying the course if that means continuing to do exactly the same things we have been doing in Iraq, the administration's rhetorical adjustment is shrewd. Bush also gave a frank press conference, acknowledging the disappointments and failures in Iraq and vowing to find new ways to address them. Since people had begun to suspect that his optimism on Iraq was detached from reality, this adjustment too was necessary. But, as ever, the most important events are on the ground. The Baghdad security plan has, predictably, failed. General Casey says he is considering asking for more troops for Baghdad, and he should. Meanwhile, we are creating benchmarks for Iraqi political performance as a way of pressuring Prime Minister Maliki to make the difficult choice to confront the Shiite militias that are helping drive Iraq into the abyss. It is often said that there is no purely military solution to Iraq's problems. But neither is there a purely political one. We need to try to do a better job on the security front so that the Iraqi government has the breathing room it needs to do the necessary work on the political front. This will take time, and we hope the White House bought itself some with its repositioning.

■ "All-Hands-on-Deck MSM Drive for Victory!" That's how rambunctious liberal blogger Mickey Kaus characterized the media's big push this election season, from specific races (All macaca, all the time—the *Washington Post* on Allen vs. Webb) to the airbrushed background in which the campaign proceeds (Dow at 12,000? Gas prices sinking? *Shhhh*). Everyone can find his favorite parallels, but ours is the big push to get the Republican nomination for Wendell Willkie in 1940. Willkie was a political tyro and a recent Democrat who faced a crowded GOP field. The MSM of the day carried him through—*Time*, *Life*, *Newsweek*, *Look*, *The Saturday Evening Post*. The book-review editor of the *New York Herald Tribune* was Willkie's lover. When Alice Roosevelt Longworth, who supported Ohio senator Robert Taft, heard someone going on about Willkie's "grass roots" effort, she snapped, "Yes—from grass roots of a thousand country clubs." Make that the alfalfa sprouts of a thousand salads—same deal.

■ Sen. Barack Obama has been urged to run for president by David Brooks and by Barack Obama ("given the responses that I've been getting over the last several months, I have thought about the possibility"). Obama seems to be a nice young man. He wrote a candid political memoir, *Dreams from My Father*, which is to say it had some traces of candor in it. He has served eight years in the Illinois state legislature, and not quite two in the Senate. In short, he has done nothing at all. His only qualifications for the White House are his skin and the fact that he is not a rapper. Americans yearn to vote for such a person: The Colin Powell boomlet of 1995 was fueled by little else, although he had been chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. America's obsession with race is odd, and opportunists manipulate it for their own advantage. But there it is, our history. Perhaps Obama will benefit from our concerns; perhaps he will even do something first. Since he is only 45, we have years to wait and see.

Sen. Harry Reid, puttin' on the you-know-what *(see page 8)*

ROMAN GENN

■ The Tennessee Senate race, between former Chattanooga mayor Bob Corker (R.) and Rep. Harold Ford Jr. (D.), was enlivened, beyond the excitement of its closeness, by an anti-Ford spot from the Republican National Committee. In a montage of "ordinary" folk, a sweet young thing says, "I met Harold at the *Playboy* party!" then returns at the end to purr, "Harold, call me." The lady refers to the fact that Ford attended a party thrown by the venerable skin mag at the 2005 Super Bowl. The ad sought to puncture Ford's image as a pious conservative Democrat; the angle of attack was petty, real petty. But since Ford is black and the actress is white, Ford supporters accused

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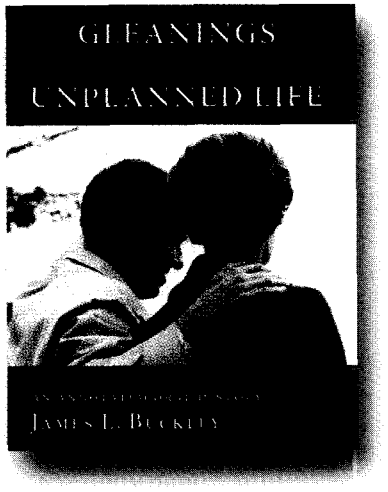
Remarkable Conservative Lives



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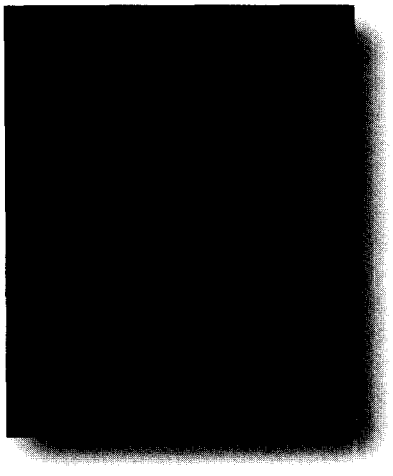

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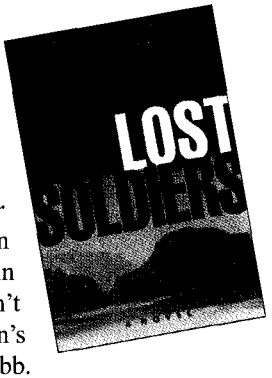
THE WEEK...

the RNC of race-baiting. The ad "makes the Willie Horton ad look like child's play," said a Vanderbilt professor. This is crazy, and (sadly) customary. Black public figures across the spectrum, from Justice Clarence Thomas to Sen. Barack Obama, have white wives or mothers. America shrugs its collective shoulders. If, to avoid the accusation, the RNC had paired Ford with a black cutie, they would have been accused of aping blaxploitation flicks. The rule is: Republicans may not accuse black Democrats of anything. Ever.



■ When the reelection campaign of Sen. George Allen (R., Va.) pointed out that the novels of his opponent James Webb contained some lurid sexual bits, Democrats scuttled to the heights of *l'art pour l'art*. "I seriously doubt George Allen is much of a reader," huffed John Grisham. We know John Grisham isn't much of a writer and, based on Allen's anthology of excerpts, neither is Webb. Art does not exist in a hermetic realm; it is possible to speculate what Homer and Shakespeare thought about war or politics, though not in a 30-second spot. Yet politics is a contact sport; everything one does in public, as George Allen has surely learned, is fair game. The depressing thing about this race is that, thanks partly to the toxic media environment created by the *Washington Post*, and partly to his own incompetence, Allen has been unable to focus on serious issues, on which he would surely prevail. So what would be our bumper sticker? GEORGE ALLEN—VOTE FOR HAM-FIST.

■ Michael J. Fox, looking very wobbly from Parkinson's disease, cut ads for Democratic candidates who favor embryo-destructive stem-cell research, including research on cloned human embryos. Rush Limbaugh questioned whether Fox had deliberately gone off his medications to dramatize his illness. Liberals and the press were outraged, which is to say delighted. Fox has said that, when he testified before the Senate some years ago, he went off his medications for political effect. So while Limbaugh's speculation was impolitic, it was hardly baseless. Whatever the truth of the matter, Fox's ads grossly overstated the case for his position. The Republicans he flayed do not, as he suggested, oppose all types of stem-cell research; and he used words carefully chosen to conceal the fact that the research he is advocating concerns cloning or even the destruction of human embryos. The campaign in which Fox is participating is based on lies, even if his appearance is not.

■ In the Pennsylvania Senate race, pro-lifers have the luxury of choosing between two candidates who pledge to vote with them. Pro-life conservatives, qua conservatives, should find it easy to back Republican incumbent Rick Santorum, who is far superior to his adversary, Bob Casey Jr., on everything from Social Security to trade to marriage. Even on abortion, Santorum gets the edge. Casey's late father wanted to rebuild the Democratic party's shriveled pro-life wing; the son has no such ambition. He has said that he would not make the fight for life a priority in the Senate—unlike Santorum, who not only votes right but sponsors legislation and presses the case for life in debates. Sen. Charles Schumer and Howard Dean, meanwhile, have both been reassuring pro-choice Democrats that Casey is sound on judges. In other words: He will vote to make sure that none of his pro-life votes ends up making a difference. Pro-lifers who support Casey's campaign will find out that they're canceling out their own votes, too.

■ New Jersey is a preserve of corruption. Gov. Jim McGreevey tried to hide his in 2004 with a martyr makeover (the closet made him a sleaze). Sen. Robert Torricelli couldn't hide his, so in 2002 the Democrats bounced him off the ballot at the last minute and plugged in one of their rare honest men, former senator Frank Lautenberg, who now holds the seat. Now Sen. Robert Menendez, locked in an election battle with Tom Kean Jr., son of a popular former governor, is fighting an aura of small-time deals and squeezes. He receives rent from a nonprofit that gets federal funding, and his closest political associate pressured a doctor who works in a county hospital to make a hire because it would be a "favor" to Menendez. A CBS/*New York Times* poll shows that 19 percent of New Jerseyites say "corruption/crooked" are the first words that come to mind when they think of Menendez. Shouldn't an incumbent's base of support be larger?

■ The Bush administration's new National Space Policy promises to "deny, if necessary, adversaries the use of space capabilities hostile to U.S. national interests." This goal is sensible, because America relies on satellites for national security, economic activity, and scientific research. It's also roughly the same position the Clinton administration adopted a decade ago. Yet a coalition of liberals and peaceniks has condemned it. The dispute pits hawks who recognize the prime importance of 21st-century spacepower against doves who prefer that international treaties restrict America's technological advantages. At the United Nations last year, 160 countries called for negotiations on banning weapons from space, potentially including space-based missile defense. The United States was the only nation to vote against it. An administration led by John Kerry might have behaved differently: Kerry has called space weapons "very disturbing" and has indicated that he favors a ban. So if we are to preserve and protect our space capabilities, we will have to overcome European diplomats, Chinese Communists, and their American allies. The United States would be best served by a new Monroe Doctrine that permits foreign powers to use space for commerce and science and denies them the ultimate high ground for military adventurism.

■ In September, a jeering *New York Times* editorial proclaimed, "President Bush finally has some real terrorists in Guantanamo Bay." What prompted this jibe was the CIA's transfer of 14 high-priority prisoners into Guantanamo to await trial by military tribunal. When Donald Rumsfeld wrote to the *Times* to explain that hundreds of "real terrorists" had in fact been held there for years, the editors refused to print the letter. The episode

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We read of scientific research indicating that the earth's crust is billions of years old and that fossils of mankind are being unearthed from thirty thousand years ago. Consider that whoever or whatever created the earth and its people communicates with them by means of natural laws.

Richard W. Wetherill
1906-1989

During the past century, that communication revealed to the late Richard W. Wetherill the existence of a natural law not previously identified, although it relates to a ***principle*** of all natural laws: ***Conform to the action the law prescribes; failure to conform imposes penalties***.

This particular law states: ***Right behavior is logical and moral, and it succeeds; contradictory behavior is illogical or immoral, and it fails.***

When Wetherill identified the law, he called it the ***law of absolute right*** and spent decades teaching people that conformity to that law enabled them to start a new life and to recover from previous failures.

Natural laws exist in reality. The principle stated above is that conformity to the law of absolute right is mandatory and that nonconformity accounts for society's chaotic, deadly affairs.

Wetherill considered it the super-natural law, as all natural laws require strict conformity to their function or penalties are imposed. The ultimate penalty for not conforming to nature's behavioral law, sooner or later, results in death of the body, which explains why death is universally thought to be inevitable.

While people tend to dispute that concept, is there any evidence that their management of human affairs has established peace, stopped criminal activity, preserved life, or eliminated any other unwanted results?

Despite all human efforts to produce a peaceful and productive society, society remains an adversarial and afflicted entity composed of a wide spectrum of do-gooders at one end and terrorists at the other; everybody reacting to the realities of life with irrational judgments that contradict natural law.

Theorize that whoever or whatever is the creator awaits human adjustment to the ***law of absolute right***, knowing that people's well-being depends on taking *right action in every moment of every situation.*

Lacking understanding, even infants form irrational thoughts. Later, those who become heads of nations, influential savants, or persons of no status are influenced by those same infant thoughts in their adult decisions, adding irrational elements that critics hold against them.

In addition, people form personal plans made up of likes and dislikes, wants and don't wants that contradict natural law and cause seemingly endless trouble. Could that be what the creator intends? We think not—based on the communication received from natural laws, providing for everybody's total well-being.

Today those who take pride in *their* plans say this information is demeaning when, in fact, it is the most liberating ever provided humanity. But descriptive words are powerless. *The power to change behavior is found in perceiving the reality of natural laws, not in the words used to define them.*

For example, acting in accord with the reality of natural laws assures conformity to the plan of whoever or whatever is the creator. And as people reason exclusively from those laws, they become aware of a higher purpose in life. A purpose being communicated from the law of absolute right, informing them that natural laws express the creator's plan to form a peacefully vibrant, productive society!

❖ ❖ ❖

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Text written by E. Marie Bothe, president of The Alpha Publishing House and former assistant to Mr. Wetherill for many years.

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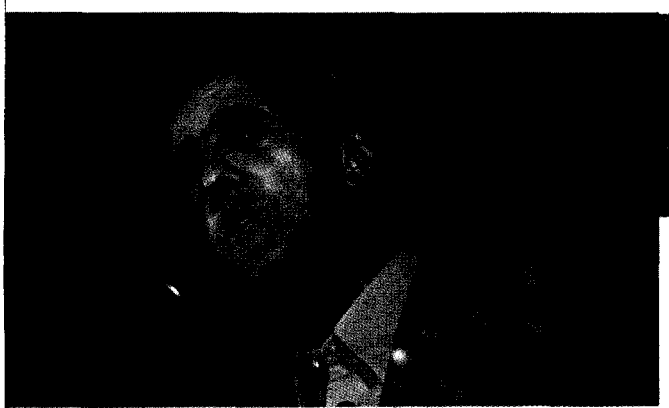
THE WEEK...

perfectly encapsulates so much of what is wrong with that editorial page: the smugness and sarcasm, the lack of seriousness in the face of terrorism, and the utter unwillingness to entertain disagreement. To the sophisticates who penned the editorial, we make this modest proposal: Pick out all the Gitmo detainees in residence before the CIA transfer (none of whom are "real terrorists" anyway), and we'll release them into your custody for a one-week trial period. If, after staying as your houseguests for seven days, none of them has chopped off the heads of any infidels, then they'll be free to go.

■ We came across an extraordinary, delicious sentence in the news: "Senate Democratic leader Harry Reid has been using campaign donations instead of his personal money to pay Christmas bonuses for the support staff at the Ritz-Carlton, where he lives in an upscale condominium." What is so extraordinary and delicious about that? Let us count the ways. First, you can still see the word "Christmas" in a news item. Second, the Democratic leader in the Senate lives in the Ritz-Carlton. We have nothing against the Ritz, and some of us NR editors wish we lived there ourselves. But Reid is a Democratic leader, and therefore a Tribune of the People. It is far more pleasant to uplift the downtrodden, and scourge the wealthy, from the comforts of the Ritz-Carlton. Third, the man has tipped his doormen with campaign funds—do you? He has promised that, from now on, he will reach into his own pocket, which raises the question: Will he tip those doormen the same—or less? Pardon us our mirth, in what has been a generally gloomy year for the Party of the Rich.

■ Alberto Fernandez, the State Department's director of press and public diplomacy in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs,



ANN JOHANSSON/AP

A (Tall) Pretzel Of Asininity

ENTRENCHED somewhere in Boston's biotech corridor there must be a newfangled Wonka Works dedicated to growing enormous liberal doofuses in a petri dish, or maybe a strawberry patch. And every now and then the Oompa-Loompas roll out something that looks like Michael Dukakis, John Kerry, or the Augustus Gloop of American liberalism, Ted Kennedy.

John Kerry bent himself into a pretzel of asininity when he was criticized for telling a crowd of students that if they didn't study hard, do their homework, and get smart, they'd end up "stuck in Iraq." No doubt the debate over his intent—"tactless, haughty crapweasel makes idiotic joke about Bush and sounds like he's insulting the troops" versus "tactless, haughty crapweasel actually does insult the troops"—will seem stale beer before long. But even if Kerry is being honest when he says he didn't mean to insult the troops (which is plausible), what he fails to understand is that it's an entirely reasonable mistake to think that he *did* mean to. Because when John Kerry seemed to insult the troops, he sounded like John Kerry.

Kerry's rage at being "swiftboated" never takes into account the possibility that there was merit in the swiftboating. It's all Rovian distortions, he says. But he is the living embodiment of Vietnam Syndrome, a malady that has paralyzed much of the Democratic party for going on 40 years now. He has made a career by speaking in the cadences of anti-Vietnam protest—if "cadences" isn't too fancy a word for the rhetoric of one of America's worst public speakers. He didn't become a senator because of his service in Vietnam; he became a senator because he attacked service in Vietnam, and those who served. That's why vets overwhelmingly rejected the faux pomp and circumstance of his 2004 campaign.

Even if that campaign hadn't been an absolute fluke (Kerry's nomination depended entirely on Howard Dean's suddenly imploding and Democrats' convincing themselves that a lifelong dove is as good as a hawk if he served in the military), Vietnam would still be the only important event or accomplishment in Kerry's otherwise blah career. He has no other prism to look through, no other lexicon to borrow from. People couldn't tell whether he was joking about Iraq because he has spent his whole public life recycling the same tired anti-Vietnam lines (which were dishonest then and are doubly so now). But Kerry is so lacking in self-awareness that he thinks he's being smeared. His reaction should have been the one most of us have when we hear our recorded voice: "Oh my gosh—I sound like that?"

The leadership of Kerry's entire party sounds like that. The Democrats haven't had a foreign policy since Vietnam, and liberalism hasn't found a post-Vietnam politics generally—which is why Michael Dukakis did his Beetle Bailey impersonation on that M1 Abrams, and why Ted Kennedy dusts off the "quagmire" speech every time a tank rolls off the gangplank. Here's the secret they're missing: Liberalism's performance during the Vietnam War is no longer considered something to brag about. It's time for the Oompa-Loompas to roll out something new.

—JONAH GOLDBERG

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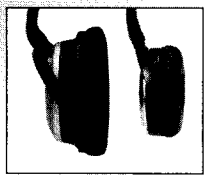

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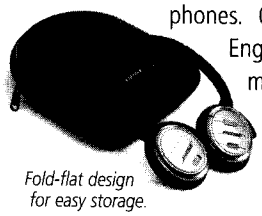

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The Week...

went on al-Jazeera and, in his fluent Arabic, said that the United States—which has freed 26 million Iraqis from Saddam Hussein's sadistic tyranny—is guilty of "arrogance" and "stupidity" in Iraq. He has now apologized, lamely conceding that he "seriously misspoke." (He has not yet explained what he meant to say.) How are we supposed to win the "war of ideas" when our ideas are so poorly represented?

■ Oh for the days when we knew how to deal with traitors. That's what Lynne Stewart is. While acting as the defense lawyer for Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman, mastermind of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, she violated a judge's order by smuggling a message from an Islamic militant to her client. (The militant wanted to know, *Should we observe a ceasefire?*) She broke the law again by calling an Egyptian reporter with the sheik's reply. (*No.*) She received letters from the sheik's supporters saying that this reply would prompt violence. So, naturally, she released a press statement confirming it. In the fight between civilization and the terrorists, she sided with the terrorists. For this, a federal judge has sentenced her to a mere 28 months in prison. The prosecutors wanted 30 years. So did many of the jurors, one of whom summed up the shameful outcome perfectly: "The end of this process is a person who committed very serious crimes out on the street smiling with bouquets of roses."

■ There's a modest new smoking ban in Omaha, Neb.: It covers banks, bars, schools, laundromats, retail stores, shopping malls, sports arenas, theaters, private clubs, work areas, employee lounges, restrooms, conference rooms, meeting rooms, classrooms, cafeterias, public hallways, healthcare facilities, buses, trains, taxicabs, and . . . you get the idea. City officials have urged citizens to call 9-1-1 to report illegal smokers, just as they would to turn in any other dangerous criminals. The Omaha ban is being billed by its supporters as "less restrictive" than the one in Lincoln, where, we assume, violators are shot on sight.

Here Come the Judges

New Jersey's, actually, who
Decreed same sexers must
Receive the right to toss bouquets—
And catch them, too. The dust
Hangs heavy over Trenton, though
If "marriage," say, were ditched
From documents, Rosie, maybe,
Could get herself re-hitched.

—W. H. von Dreele

■ The genocide in Darfur has claimed 200,000 lives and displaced 2.5 million people—and it is not over. Sudan refuses to let a United Nations force replace the ineffective African Union troops who have failed to stop the killing, and its intransigence meets with nothing but milquetoast diplomatic protest. Now Khartoum has expelled the U.N.'s envoy from Sudan. His offense was to report, on his personal blog, that the Sudanese army had suffered losses in fighting with rebels, and that Sudan's government had responded by mobilizing janjaweed militias to do its bidding. If that is true, we can expect more indiscriminate slaughter. A Kosovo-style bombing campaign against Khartoum might make it rather more susceptible to the U.N.'s demands, but Sudanese president Omar al-Bashir is betting that the West would rather ignore what is happening in Darfur until it is too late. Unfortunately, he is probably correct.

■ The Cuban government insists that Fidel Castro is the picture of health. Rumors circulate that he is dying of stomach cancer. But Cuba will not escape the yoke of Communism even in Castro's death. He will almost certainly be succeeded by his brother Raúl, widely regarded as the nastier and more ideological of the pair. And Raúl will almost certainly be excused and adored by Europe, Hollywood, and the American Left, just as his brother has been. Meanwhile, the Cuban people . . .

■ A year ago, Arab and Muslim youths were rioting in some 300 cities and towns all over France. They specialized in torching cars, hundreds of them every night, and throwing Molotov cocktails at the police and fire services. Ever since, the whole country has been arguing about the root causes of the violence, the failure of integration, alienation, the emergence of a bicultural society, and much else in the politico-sociological vein now current in Europe. Young Arabs and Muslims are commemorating the anniversary of last year's riots with more of the same. Some have acquired handguns. "The context is still the same, nothing has changed," says the spokesman of an Arab and Muslim group called ACLEFEU, which collects grievances from minorities across France. One of their slogans reads, "Immigrants scare the French." Well, yes.

■ The worst terrorist attack on Argentine soil, and in fact the largest single incident of mass killing of Jews since the Holocaust, was the 1994 suicide bombing of a Jewish cultural center in Buenos Aires. The blast killed 85 people and wounded more than 200 others. A special Argentine investigative unit has been probing that attack, and two prosecutors from that unit have now asked a federal judge to order the arrest of former Iranian president Hashemi Rafsanjani and seven others. The decision to attack the center, said prosecutor Alberto Nisman at a news conference, "was undertaken in 1993 by the highest authorities of the then-government of Iran." He added that the actual attack was entrusted to the Lebanon-based terror group Hezbollah. None of this seems particularly unlikely, given the nature of the Iranian government, though we can only wish good luck to the Argentine authorities in executing the arrest warrant, should it be approved. The Iranians dismissed the charges as a Zionist plot "to divert the [*sic*] world public opinion at the threshold of International Qods Day." We confess that our

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86	9.9%
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own opinion was thoroughly diverted, to the degree that we forgot all about International Qods Day . . .

■ Palestinians are busy shooting at one another on the West Bank and in Gaza in the name of Hamas and its rival, the PLO. They do things a bit differently in Galway, a rather sleepy town in the west of Ireland where they still concentrate on hating Israel more than they hate one another. A new Israeli ambassador, Dr. Zion Evrony, has just taken up his post in Ireland, and among his first assignments was to lecture at the law school of Galway's university. Dozens of protesters waving Palestinian flags greeted the ambassador, and at an agreed signal tried to break up the speech. They were asked to leave. Once the ambassador had spoken and was driving away, they attacked his car, climbing over it and pounding on the roof. One of these protesters recorded the incident on a website: "He disgorged out the front to a hot and angry wall of chanting, out the gates in a blast of exhaust smoke to disappear into his country's natural realm, the darkness." The Irish literary tradition evidently has nothing more to offer.

■ The Czech Republic is without a government, and times have scarcely been better. June elections resulted in a parliamentary deadlock, with no political party able to form a coalition. President Václav Klaus's first pick for prime minister resigned in October after failing to win a confidence vote, and now Klaus is urging MPs to amend the constitution in order to call early elections. But while the politicians have scrambled for a solution, unemployment has fallen, GDP has risen, and life has gone on much as before. We trust the Czechs will want a functioning state eventually—there's that whole national-defense thing, for instance. But in the meantime, let's hear a cheer for limited government.

■ Brown University was founded in 1764 in Rhode Island. Race slavery was a commonplace feature of life in the North American colonies at that time, and so Brown, like many another long-lived U.S. institution, can be considered tainted by association with the odious practice of buying and selling human beings. An institutional apology would be a gracious act; though since no one now alive is at fault, it is hard to see why matters need go any further than that. Restraint in matters of racial guilt is, however, not a characteristic of our society today, most certainly not of our academic institutions. At Brown, a loftily named Steering Committee on Slavery and Justice has been toiling away for three years to document the university's ties to slavery, and to determine the proper way for Brown to make amends. They have now brought forth their report, recommending the building of a memorial, the establishment of a center for the study of slavery and injustice, and increased efforts to recruit black students, particularly from Africa and the West Indies. Will there ever come a day when we can stop picking at these ancient wounds and let them heal? No, not if the merchants of racial guilt have their way.

■ The James Madison Program is an enclave of good sense at Princeton University. (It was established by our friend Robert P. George, professor of jurisprudence.) Now the Manhattan Institute is building a fund to create similar programs at schools where conservatism is scant. And how many schools does that not describe? Our hat is off to the Manhattan Institute, and we dream of a day when education, not indoctrination, will be the norm—or at least the goal—on campuses.

■ As the justification for the Michigan Civil Rights Initiative becomes more obvious, the opposition to it becomes more intense. The ballot measure, to be decided by Michigan voters on November 7, would ban racial preferences in state-government hiring and state-university admissions. These preferences discriminate against students who, because they do not belong to the desired minority group, must attain much higher standards of academic achievement to gain admission. The Center for Equal Opportunity has just released a study analyzing admissions data from the University of Michigan. In 2005, median SAT scores for admitted students were 1,160 for blacks, 1,260 for Hispanics, 1,350 for whites, and 1,400 for Asians. Median GPAs followed the same pattern: 3.4 for blacks, 3.6 for Hispanics, 3.8 for whites, and 3.9 for Asians. Blacks were about 70 times more likely to be admitted than whites with the same SAT scores. But this is the way many people want it: A recent radio ad attacked the ballot initiative, saying that "the elimination of affirmative action" would be a "national disaster" comparable to Hurricane Katrina and 9/11. Those comparisons are transparently grotesque—but then, this is exactly what we have come to expect from those who cling to the Left's favored racism.

■ The Department of Education has released new guidelines making it easier to establish single-sex public schools and classrooms. The change has met with cries of "discrimination"—to which the obvious answer is that boys and girls are different, and evidence (along with common sense and experience) suggests that schools might better suit them if they were taught separately. The Department of Education's rules require that an alternative to any single-sex school always be available, but this is not enough for the partisans of diversity, who want their wishes to be imposed even—or especially—where not desired. They will likely try to recruit the courts to their side. Meanwhile, most people will probably welcome this expansion of educational choice.

■ Is the British Broadcasting Corporation anti-Israel? The Israeli government certainly thought so back in 2003, and issued an official complaint over the BBC's coverage of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. The governors of the corporation, in response, commissioned a 20,000-word report on the topic of this alleged bias. Although the BBC and its report are publicly funded, the report has never been released, and the BBC seems very keen indeed to make sure that it never is. Legal action to force the report's publication resulted in a ruling against the BBC, but the corporation has now appealed this ruling to Britain's highest court. Strange . . . though not strange to one of our editors, who often goes to the BBC website for news of the sciences, coverage of which, he tells us, is

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THE WEEK...

excellent. The lead item on the BBC science website the other day read as follows: "Up to 15,000 metric tonnes of heavy fuel oil spilled into the Mediterranean when Lebanon's Jiyyeh power plant was bombed in mid-July by the Israeli military . . ." This, please note, is the *science* news. Anti-Israel bias at the Beeb? Could be.

■ The split in the Episcopal Church of the USA widened a little more the other week, as Bishop Andrew Smith of the Connecticut diocese authorized his priests to bless homosexual unions. Bishop Smith was careful to point out that this is not church marriage for homosexuals, only permission for parishes to acknowledge the civil unions approved by Connecticut legislators last year. True enough; but Bishop Smith has been pushing the pro-homosexual agenda in his church all through the seven years of his incumbency, and no one supposes that this is the end of his efforts. Conservative Episcopalians are pushing back in force. The American Anglican Council, an umbrella group for church conservatives, noted that Bishop Smith's latest action "further evidences his militancy with the homosexual gay agenda." Indeed it does. It also illustrates the blindness of Bishop Smith and much of the ECUSA hierarchy to the fact that most ordinary congregants are not homosexual, and, while wishing no harm or offense to the differently oriented, would much prefer not to have to spend the trip home from family services explaining the vagaries of human sexual inclination to their children.

■ The city of Cincinnati recently held a celebration to mark the reopening of its Fountain Square. Nikki Giovanni, a poetess who grew up in the city, was invited to write and recite a poem for the occasion. To say the poem was not very good would be a gross understatement. It was tripe, notable only for vulgarity and impropriety. Giovanni managed to work in, among other things, her thoughts on Ohio gubernatorial candidate Kenneth Blackwell: "I am not a son of a bitch like Kenny Blackwell. . . . I will not use the color of my skin to cover the hatred in my heart / I am not a political whore jumping from bed to bed to see who will stroke my need." Whatever the color of her skin does, it does not cover what might be construed as hatred in her heart.

■ Our government sponsors AIDS-prevention and family-planning programs overseas. These efforts involve the annual distribution of hundreds of millions of condoms, which the federal agencies involved must buy from suppliers. Should the feds follow a policy of . . . protection, buying from domestic suppliers, and thereby preserving American jobs? Or should they help lubricate the wheels of international commerce by buying from Third World condom-makers, at lower prices? The issue is one of enhanced sensitivity to the people of Alabama, where most government-purchased condoms are made. It seemed for a while as though the Heart of Dixie might lose out altogether to penetration by Chinese and Korean manufacturers, but the *New York Times* reports that these fears were premature. Complete withdrawal of Asian firms has not been achieved, and there have been some layoffs in Alabama's condom factories; but thanks to the efforts of Sen. Jeff Sessions and other state lawmakers, the Trojan horse of foreign competition is being kept at bay.

■ Red Auerbach is one of the best coaches in history, along with John Wooden, Adolph Rupp, Hank Iba. And we could reach beyond basketball, too (Paul Brown, Vince Lombardi). Auerbach was born in 1917, in Brooklyn; his father was an immigrant from Russia. Red first coached professional ball in 1946, with the Washington Capitols. The league was the Basketball Association of America, forerunner to the NBA. He later coached the Boston Celtics to nine championships, eight of them in a row. As general manager and president of the team, he presided over another seven. Auerbach had great players, yes—Cousy, Russell, Havlicek—but he made them better than they would have been, and had found them, and landed them, in the first place. He could be irascible, but had abundant humanity. He was especially known for a common touch—and for advancing racial justice. He was the first to start an all-black lineup (in the 1963–64 season), and named Bill Russell his successor as coach of the Celtics, giving America its first black coach of any major pro team. Auerbach was a basketball genius, and lived a full, rich life. He evoked grins wherever he went (though not necessarily in the opposition). Dead, age 89. R.I.P.

AP

MARRIAGE

And Now New Jersey

EARLIER this year, defenders of marriage as we have known it enjoyed a string of victories in the courts. Several state and federal courts turned back challenges to states' marriage laws, leaving it to voters and state legislators to decide whether those laws should be changed to allow for legal recognition of same-sex "marriages."

At the time, some commentators took the decision as proof that constitutional protection for marriage was unnecessary. Those of us who had warned that the courts were going to impose same-sex marriage on a balking public were dismissed, as we have been before, as alarmist.

Our response was twofold. First, we pointed out that the tenor of the judicial decisions was in part a response to the political success of the campaign for the marriage amendment—without it, more courts would have followed the lead of the Massachusetts high court, imposed same-sex marriage, and patted themselves on the back as civil-rights pioneers. Second, we observed that as welcome as those decisions were, traditional marriage laws—and the right of the people and their elected representatives to draw them up—would exist only on judicial sufferance without an amendment. If the judicial mood changed,

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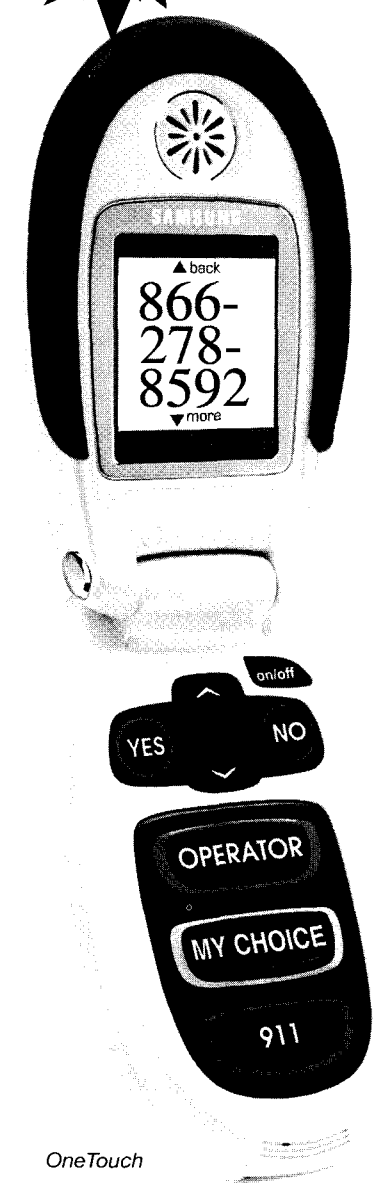

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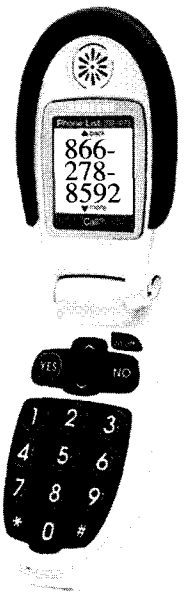

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for example because the campaign for an amendment had flagged, then judges would recommence altering the marriage laws. And, of course, some bold court might decide to impose its conception of justice, political consequences be damned, by rewriting the marriage laws.

New Jersey's supreme court has, alas, now proven us right. Even in that liberal state, protective of gay rights, the political process did not yield the marriage policy liberal legal activists have sought. So they have gotten the court to hand them victory.

It is being described as a partial victory, because the court has said that same-sex couples must have access to the same benefits as married ones but not that their relationships must be officially called "marriages." Do not be fooled. The court has accepted the premise that treating married couples differently from same-sex couples is a kind of irrational discrimination. That premise leads fairly directly to same-sex marriage in logic, and may do so in future litigation.

There is another reason to expect that this attempt to split the benefits from the name of marriage will collapse. Portability is a real benefit of a state-recognized marriage. When Texas declares you married, in the normal course of things Arkansas does too. You can cross state lines without worrying whether your marriage remains legally valid. For good reasons, the federal government has allowed states not to recognize same-sex "marriages" in other states. Whether that federal policy will withstand the activism of liberal courts remains to be seen. But even if it does, same-sex couples in New Jersey may legitimately ask: If we are to have all the benefits of marriage on an equal basis, then are we not entitled for the state to give us the best shot it can at ensuring that those benefits are portable? And does that not mean that we are entitled to the word "marriage" as well as to its accoutrements?

There is no good argument for letting judges redefine marriage in one state after another and calling it federalism.

The basic move that the New Jersey court made was from a constitutional guarantee of equality to same-sex marriage rights. It is the same move that has been made in other courts. And it is the same move that has been made by social liberals in the court of public opinion: To deny marriage to same-sex couples is, supposedly, to treat homosexuals as less than full citizens. Not a few advocates have even said that it is to treat them as less than fully human.

Against this sentiment, conservatives have countered first that equal rights for individuals do not entail a right of couples to have marriage redefined to suit their desires, and second that it would not be up to courts to draw out that implication even were it true. There is an argument for letting the people of each state decide their own policy on marriage, although a uniform national definition of marriage has its advantages too. But there is no good argument for letting judges redefine marriage in one state after another and calling it federalism.

A healthy culture of marriage is, among other good things, a crucial prerequisite for self-government. We fear that both marriage and self-government will suffer if a constitutional amendment does not rein in the courts.

IMMIGRATION

Behold, a Fence

"We all know that this bill is going nowhere. We are wasting our time," declared minority whip Steny Hoyer when he joined the 131 House Democrats who voted against the Secure Fence Act in early September. Hoyer let liberal wishful thinking triumph over reality. President Bush recently signed exactly that authorization to build a 700-mile fence along the southern border.

The bill that went nowhere was the "comprehensive" reform, favored by President Bush and congressional Democrats, that granted amnesty to millions and guest-worker status to millions more. The House Republicans' enforcement-first approach to immigration reform—at least a piece of it—won decisively when the Secure Fence Act passed the Senate by a margin of 80–19. But the battle isn't over; it's merely suspended. The enforcement agenda will lose decisively if the next immigration-reform bill President Bush signs is the handiwork of a Speaker Pelosi's House Democrats.

Rep. Hoyer had plenty of company when he dismissed the prospect that the enforcement-first agenda could triumph over all the influential lobbies in favor of amnesty for illegal aliens and the business community's insistence on a guest-worker program. Elite opinion held that the House Republicans' position was politically poisonous. Illegals marched in the streets, and the talk was of an inevitable House Republican backdown. But the public's engagement in the first debate on immigration policies in 20 years revealed widespread support for border control. In competitive races across the country, candidates of both parties have declared their opposition to amnesty and backing barriers at the border.

The public's engagement in the first debate on immigration policies in 20 years revealed widespread support for border control.

At stake in this election is whether public sentiment will continue to prevail, or whether a Democratic majority in the House will help again take U.S. immigration policy the opposite, more liberal direction. Comprehensive immigration reform already enjoys President's Bush's endorsement and filibuster-proof support in the Senate. It's impossible to predict all the consequences of a congressional Democratic majority, but a win for congressional Democrats will clearly be a win for amnesty.

On the issue of immigration, majorities of Republicans in both the Senate and House have sided with their conservative base against not just left-wing civil-rights groups and elite opinion, but also a business lobby accustomed to plenty of cheap labor, Republican-party pooh-bahs, and President Bush. They have withstood withering press criticism and pressure from their deep-pocketed donors. It has been a dispiriting session of Congress, but on this crucial issue, congressional Republicans have acted with courage and commitment.

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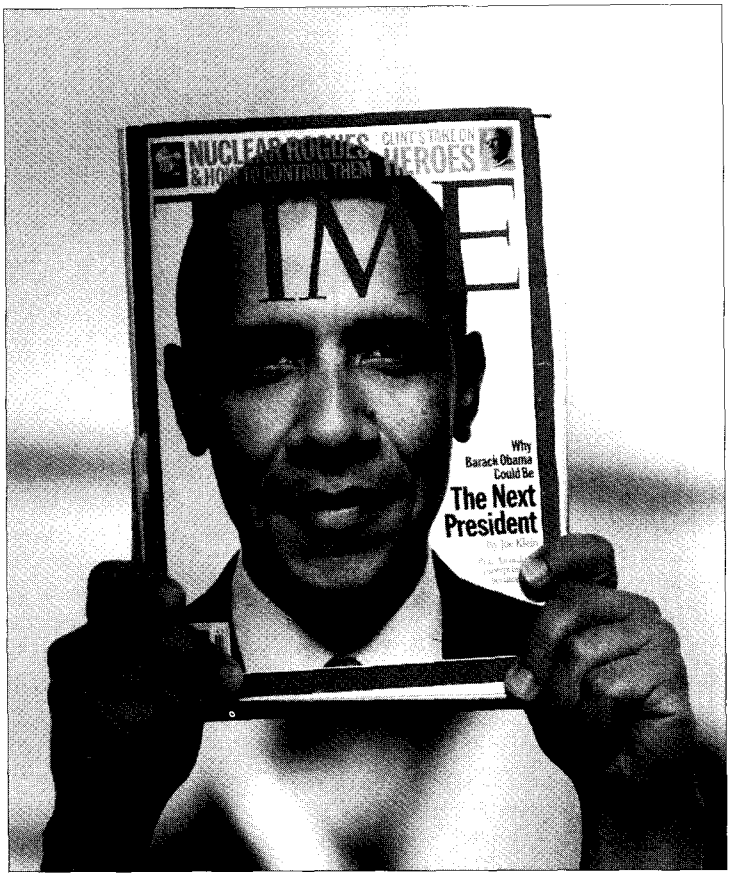

■ POLITICS ■

Obama Madness

Is the junior Illinois senator the Democrats' savior?

BYRON YORK

In late October, during the home stretch of the most intensely contested midterm election in years, many Democrats seemed to drop everything, forget about 2006, and fall into a swoon over somebody who is not, at the moment, running for anything. Illinois senator Barack Obama appeared on *Oprah*, *Meet the Press*, and the cover of *Time*—in a story headlined "Why Barack Obama Could Be the Next President"—and in no time found himself anointed the Future of the Democratic Party.

Or maybe even more than that. The online magazine *Slate* flatly declared that in the course of ten days Obama "turned American politics upside down." *Time*'s Joe Klein called him "the political equivalent of a rainbow—a sudden preternatural event inspiring awe and ecstasy." Other admirers threw around phrases like "American idol" and "rock star."

The Obama boomlet just happened to coincide with the publication of the senator's new book, *The Audacity of Hope: Thoughts on Reclaiming the American Dream*. And sure enough, with Oprah's help, the book shot to number one on the Amazon.com sales chart. But the wave of publicity was much more than book hype. The speed with which some Democrats and their allies in the press rushed to embrace Obama said more about the state of the party and its presidential prospects than about Obama himself. And what it said was: We're really, really nervous about Hillary Clinton.

"There is a *ton* of nervousness about Hillary," says a Democratic strategist who asked to remain anonymous. "There are a lot of people looking for an alternative, and they don't see it yet." Everybody knows the problem: Mrs. Clinton has tons of money, huge name recognition, and a big organization, yet a significant number of Democrats believe she is unelectable, given the baggage that she carries from her husband's years in the White House. For those Democrats, the first contest of the 2008 Democratic presidential race will be to determine who becomes what the strategist calls the "anti-Hillary."

For a while, former Virginia governor Mark Warner looked like a front-runner for that honor. Then Warner pulled out, confessing that he just didn't want it bad enough to undergo the trials of a campaign. Former senator John Edwards is another candidate, having emerged from the party's 2004 loss mostly untouched. Perhaps even John Kerry is in the running, although it's not clear Democrats would give him another chance. Whatever the case, now they've all got Obama to contend with. "He gets even with those guys just by getting in," says the strategist.

But what if Obama won the race to be the anti-Hillary, and then won the Democratic nomination? Were that to happen, Democrats would almost certainly go from being extremely nervous about Hillary to being extremely nervous about Obama. Because for all we've read about him—at age 45, he has already written two books about himself—we don't really know that much about the junior senator from Illinois.

All many of us know is that Obama has, in the phrase his admirers use a lot, a "compelling life story." But Obama's biography is not what we might normally describe as compelling. He has not overcome great deprivation, tragedy, or hardship. When he was born in Honolulu in 1961, his mother and father were students at the University of Hawaii. The father, who was black, was from Kenya; the mother, who was white, from Kansas. (Obama has joked that he worried his political career was over after 9/11 because his name sounded too much like Osama. In fact, it's better than that: Named after his father, his full name is Barack Hussein Obama Jr.) His parents divorced when Obama was two, and his mother, who earned a Ph.D. in anthropol-

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ogy, took him to Jakarta when she married another student, this one from Indonesia. When he was ten, Obama returned to Hawaii, where he lived with his grandparents and attended an elite prep school. He went to Occidental College and then to Columbia University, and then to Harvard Law School. He ended up in Chicago, working in community activism and teaching at the University of Chicago. In 1996, he won election to the Illinois state senate; in 2004, he won his current seat.

A success story, certainly. But compelling? Perhaps exotic, as Obama himself has sometimes called it, but not the stuff of John McCain. In a presidential race, Obama will have to rely on more than just his biography. And what is there? Yes, he has won election to the U.S. Senate, but that was in a race—if it qualifies to be called that—in which the Republican candidate destroyed himself in scandal and was replaced by stand-in Alan Keyes, who ran a laughable campaign. All in all, not exactly a trial by fire. "He's never been tested, never been scrutinized," the Democratic strategist says of Obama. "There's never been anyone who's pored through his past the way the Republicans will. He would be a stronger candidate if he had gone through that crucible of fire."

In a presidential race, Obama will have to rely on more than just his biography.

But he hasn't. And he won't before 2008. So rather than impressing the Democratic strategists who are looking for a scrapper (the left-wing blogosphere, for one, doesn't like him, thinking he's too much of a get-along guy), Obama appeals to the ones who are looking for a thinker. In June 2001, when Obama was still in the Illinois senate, Will Marshall, a top official of the moderate Democratic Leadership Council, visited him in Chicago. Marshall had heard good things about Obama and wanted to get a first-hand look. They talked about social policy after welfare reform, about the effects of globalization, about a number of DLC-type issues. "I was deeply impressed," Marshall says. "He has an analytical capacity, but he doesn't talk like a wonk—sort of like Clinton." Bill, that is.

As good as that may sound, the fact is that Obama hasn't done a whole lot in his two years in the Senate, and he probably won't do much in two more years in the Senate. "If he had gone from state senator to governor, and he had served one term as governor and was running for president, it would be a much more compelling case [for running in 2008]," says the Democratic strategist. "Then he would have been in a situation in which he was a final decision-maker." It would be nice, in other words, if Obama had ever run something. But he hasn't.

Obama's fans don't necessarily disagree with that. "Is four years [in the Senate] enough?" asks Will Marshall. "It may be too many. Long service in the Senate doesn't necessarily prepare you well for the rigors of a presidential campaign and for crafting a broad message." Marshall didn't say so, but one can just ask Joe Biden or Christopher Dodd. In 2008, the people advising Obama might say to him: Run now, before the Senate ruins you.

He has time to wait—at 45, assuming he stays healthy, Obama could plausibly run in any race until 2028—but 2008 is possibly a unique opportunity. There's no incumbent, no locked-in front-runner on the Democratic side. But if Democrats win, there will be an incumbent in 2012, and possibly in 2016 and 2020, too. If Obama believes Democrats have a good chance to win in 2008—well, now is the time to go.

In late October, Clemson University conducted a poll of presidential candidates in South Carolina, an important state for Democrats who hope to broaden the party's appeal at the presidential level. Among state Democrats, 98 percent knew of Hillary Clinton, and 69 percent had a favorable opinion of her. It was the highest favorable opinion in the field, with the exception of Barack Obama. Just 59 percent of those polled recognized his name, but of them, 82 percent had a favorable opinion.

If Obama runs, the 59 percent will go up, and the 82 percent will go down. And he'll finally undergo the test that will show whether he can live up to his hype, or whether he is better suited to the world of *Oprah* than to hand-to-hand politics. **NR**

■ AT WAR

Bush's Vietnam Syndrome

The president draws a wrong lesson

RICHARD LOWRY

PRESIDENT BUSH is infected with a Vietnam syndrome. He just doesn't know it.

"I guess if you're 60 years old, you tend to be a product of the Vietnam era," Bush told me and other journalists in the Oval Office recently, when asked if we need more troops in Iraq. "I remember the tactical decisions being made out of the White House during that period of time. I thought it was a mistake then and I think it's a mistake now. And, therefore, a president must have confidence and faith in the people who are actually there determining whether or not our strategy, our tactics are going to achieve the objective."

I asked Bush what if his man on the ground in Iraq, Gen. George Casey, is wrong about troop levels. "Then I picked the wrong general," he said. "And if he's wrong, I'm wrong."

Bush thinks he's avoiding a mistake of the Vietnam War, but he has only internalized a damaging, erroneous conservative belief about the conflict. Conservatives traditionally hold that it was the civilian leadership that lost the Vietnam War by restraining the military, which would have won the war but for civilian meddling.

This belief leads to a perversion of civil-military relations—to wit, Bush's astonishing view that the commander-in-chief should have no opinion on one of the most important policy questions in the Iraq War. Troop levels help determine what strategy we can pursue. And Bush's view also misunderstands what went wrong in Vietnam.

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"Land for Peace" (II)

Should the "West Bank," should the Golan be yielded?

In an earlier one of our *hasbarah* (educating and clarifying) messages, following Israel's ill-advised transfer of the vast Sinai to Egypt, we explained the folly of the belief that "Land for Peace" could bring about peace in the Middle East. Since then, Israel has given up further pieces of its small land, hoping that it would bring about peace. All these gifts of the Israeli patrimony to its sworn enemies have been in vain

What are the facts?

Land for Peace: a dismal failure. In 1977, in exchange for peace and normalization of relationship with its neighbor, Israel returned the vast Sinai Peninsula to Egypt. In retrospect, it is clear that this decision was one of the worst mistakes that Israel ever committed. The peace with Egypt is the coldest imaginable and it is likely to be rescinded if, as seems possible and even likely, a new government, similar to that of Iran, would take over in Egypt.

Always hoping against hope, Israel abandoned the buffer zone it had established in southern Lebanon, where it was able to protect its northern cities and settlements from the maraudings of Hizbollah (the "Army of God"). In order to bring about peace, and yielding to insistent pressure of "world opinion," Israel vacated this buffer zone. Hizbollah and its 20,000 missiles moved right in, invaded Israel and killed and kidnapped its soldiers. The "second Lebanese war" erupted as a consequence. It left thousands of dead and wounded on both sides and destroyed much of Lebanese infrastructure. Once again, "Land for Peace" proved to be a disaster.

Ariel Sharon, until recently prime minister of Israel, but now comatose and moribund, famously said that "responsible statesmen do not give away pieces of their country." That dictum should be even more true for Israel than for any other country, because Israel is so small that it would sink without a trace in Lake Michigan. Still, probably in his dotage, Sharon decided to abandon Gaza and to evict the thousands of Israelis who had been living there for generations.

Instead of acknowledgement and gratitude, the Gazans erupted in spasms of aggression against Israel, showered it with missiles, invaded it through tunnels, and killed and abducted Israeli soldiers. Once again, the trusted formulation of "Land for Peace" had proven to be a dismal failure.

What else is left to give away? There remain Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") and the Golan Heights. Having urged Israel to yield Gaza, most of the world, even the enlightened leaders of our own country, pressure Israel to yield the "West Bank" to the Palestinians. But that would be an existential disaster for Israel. Within weeks, the Judean ridges, which totally dominate Israel's heartland, would be occupied by Palestinian troops and, more than likely, also by troops of Syria, Iran, and quite possibly also from Jordan and Egypt. A merciless bombardment of Israeli cities, military and industrial installations, utility infrastructure and airports would immediately ensue. Tanks and armored personnel carriers, fighter planes and bombers, even chemical weapons would promptly materialize. "Land for Peace" would become "Land for National Suicide."

> "The only way to peace in this turbulent area is for the Arabs to undergo a complete change of heart and mind. And that, if it is to happen at all, will take a very long time."

Syria is Israel's most implacable enemy, sworn to its destruction. It is an insistent supporter of terrorism; it hosts the most vicious Palestinian rejectionists; it is the missile supplier to Hizbollah; and it is allied with Iran's murderous Ahmadinejad. Still, there are those who press for "dialog" with Syria and urge Israel to return the Golan to this murderous regime. But that would be even more disastrous than handing over the "West Bank" to the Arabs. When Syria was in possession of the Golan it bombarded Israel's northern cities and settlements almost daily, making life intolerable. It used the Golan three times to invade Israel. It was only the skill and courage of the Israeli Defense Forces that in each of these cases prevented disaster.

If Israel were to commit the folly of returning the Golan to Syria, it would put itself in mortal danger. Together with having handed over the "West Bank," Gaza being armed with heavy weapons and, in all likelihood, Jordan and Egypt having cancelled their peace treaties, Israel would be totally surrounded by mortal enemies whose only foreign policy objective seems to be the destruction of Israel.

Most of the Arabs and Iran are Israel's implacable enemies and don't hesitate to proclaim their goal, namely "wiping Israel off the map," "driving the Jews into the sea," or "excising the cancer of the Zionist entity." These formulations, which have been repeated and confirmed for decades and which the Arabs, so far unsuccessfully, have repeatedly attempted to implement, make it clear that no further land that Israel might foolishly yield to the Arabs would bring peace one step closer. The only way to peace in this turbulent area is for the Arabs to undergo a complete change of heart and mind. And that, if it is to happen at all, will take a very long time.

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During the Kennedy administration, civilian leadership had a better understanding of the budding war in Vietnam than the military did. Lyndon Johnson's infamous restraints on the military weren't all necessarily that unreasonable, and in key respects he allowed the military to have its way. Finally, the military itself had no idea how to win the war.

The true lesson of Vietnam is that the civilian leadership should exercise close supervision of the military and ensure that, when fighting an insurgency, it utilizes all those tools—such as intensive small-unit patrolling, intelligence gathering, and training of indigenous forces—that don't come naturally to a U.S. Army that is most comfortable when simply closing with and smashing a conventional enemy.

As Andrew F. Krepinevich Jr. recounts in his classic book on the military's failures in the war, *The Army and Vietnam*, it was a civilian, President John F. Kennedy, who was prescient about the coming era of guerrilla warfare. He pushed the Army to learn counterinsurgency warfare, but it fundamentally ignored him. It undertook a lot of activity related to counterinsurgency, but most of it was superficial and intended only to create the impression of responding to Kennedy's proddings.

The civilian who bears the brunt of conservatives' ire is, of course, LBJ. He once bragged that "they can't bomb an outhouse without my approval," and imposed political constraints on the use of force. But in a limited war, such constraints are inevitable. The question is whether they make sense or not. The strategy of "diplomatic signaling" through an air campaign of "gradual escalation" was indeed a disaster. As Max Boot points out in his book *The Savage Wars of Peace*, the exquisitely calibrated Rolling Thunder air campaign dropped on average 800 tons of bombs a day on North Vietnam for more than three years with almost nothing to show for it.

But LBJ's obstacles shouldn't be exaggerated. According to Eliot A. Cohen in *Supreme Command*, "Johnson ended up approving most of the targets submitted by the Joint Chief of Staff." (Of course, the chiefs may have tailored the targets they submitted to the political constraints.) And some of LBJ's limits were for sound reasons. A ground invasion of the North might well have triggered a Chinese response. In general, the fear of provoking the Chinese by too wide-ranging a bombing campaign in the North might have been exaggerated, but it was reasonable enough given the recent, unhappy experience of drawing the Chinese into the Korean War.

In any case, at least early on, the Viet Cong were not over-dependent on support from the North, so hitting the North was in no way a magic bullet. A CIA study estimated that in 1965 the Viet Cong were dependent on only twelve tons a day of supplies from external sources—"an amount," Boot writes, "that, in U.S. terms, could be carried in on a tractor-trailer rig or 15 pickup trucks." Even a complete occupation of the North might not have been enough to win the war, Boot argues, since the French had done it and still lost.

The military did a perfectly fine job of losing Vietnam all on its own. In fact, this was mostly what it was left to do.

It wasn't civilian "meddling" by LBJ, McNamara, et al. in and of itself, then, that was the problem. As Cohen puts it, "The argument thus becomes less a question of how they exercised civilian control than one of how well—or poorly—they thought about strategy."

If the air war was an agonizingly gradual affair, the buildup on the ground wasn't. When Gen. William C. Westmoreland wanted 200,000 troops in 1965, LBJ quickly ponied them up. Cohen writes, "What is most striking is McNamara's and Johnson's willingness to write large checks on American military manpower through 1968, extending up to, but not including, a full mobilization of the reserves."

The problem was that the military's ideas about how to wage the war were no better than the civilian leaders'. The military was particularly clueless about counterinsurgency, which typically requires careful discrimination in applying firepower, light infantry undertaking intensive patrolling, and political action to undermine the basis of the insurgents' support in the population. With the exception of the Marines, the military wanted nothing to do with that: It was always more bombing and more troops. The military dreamed of replicating World War II with a strategy of bombing industrial sites in the North and of bleeding the Viet Cong into submission in the South.

Prior to our massive intervention, the South Vietnamese had been running large-scale search-and-destroy missions for years that were easily avoided by the VC, but the American military assumed that, if it took over, it could succeed in implementing the same flawed strategy on the basis of its superior firepower and technical prowess. Whenever it was clear that the strategy was failing, the Army's answer was always more of the same.

Westmoreland wanted to attrit the Communists, but the Communists wanted to attrit us, and had a much better understanding of whose will would be broken (the Tet Offensive bled the Viet Cong dry, but had the intended political effect in Washington). Instead of pacifying the population centers in the coastal areas, Westmoreland chased the Communists in the sparsely populated Highlands. The Communists, meanwhile, were happy to have us concentrate on the Highlands instead of having us take away their base among the population. "Westmoreland's strategy meshed perfectly with [North Vietnamese general Vo Nguyen] Giap's," Boot writes.

So the military did a perfectly fine job of losing Vietnam all on its own. In fact, this was mostly what it was left to do. "Westmoreland himself," Cohen writes, "operated under remarkably little civilian oversight." His fundamental assumptions were never probed by his civilian superiors.

Conservatives still believe, partly under the influence of historian Col. Harry G. Summers Jr., author of *On Strategy: A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War*, that the U.S. lost in Vietnam because the military wasn't given the freedom to pursue a conven-

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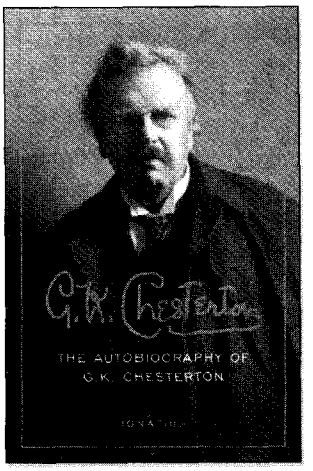
G.K. Chesterton



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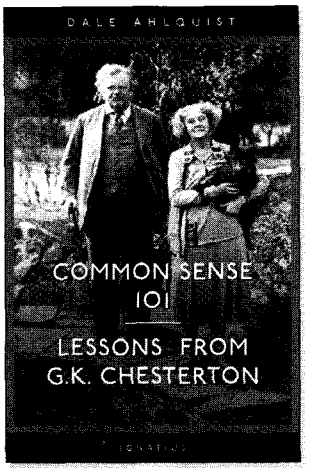

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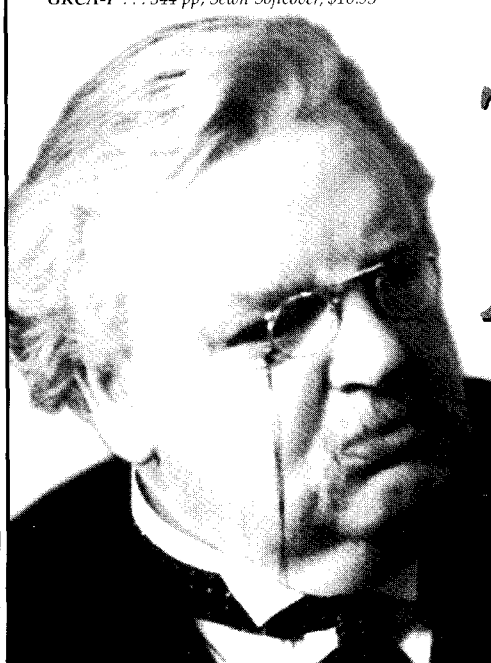

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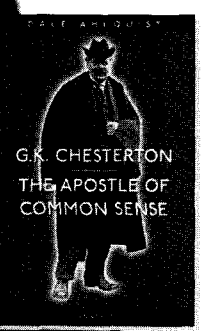

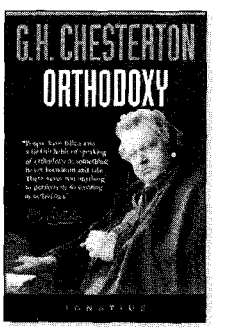

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tional war. In a paper for the Cato Institute, Jeffrey Record, who teaches at the Air War College, writes of Summers, "He argued—in complete contradiction to the historical record—that the Army failed in Vietnam because it was not sufficiently *conventional* in fighting the war." Eventually, the South did succumb to a conventional invasion from the North, but that was only because the U.S. had stopped supporting it, its political will broken by the insurgency in the South.

Too late, Gen. Creighton Abrams, Westmoreland's replacement, emphasized pacification of populated areas and other classic counterinsurgency tactics. Together with more bombing in the North, they met with some success. "By 1970," Boot writes, "more than 90% of the South's population was under Saigon's control." But Abrams still encountered mulish resistance from an Army loath to give up its over-reliance on firepower.

Even in defeat, the Army wasn't going to change its doctrine. It just decided never to fight insurgencies again. That has played a role in our difficulties in Iraq, as the Army was insufficiently prepared for the counterinsurgency it has had to wage. If we lose there—partly because we were slow to adopt with any consistency sound counterinsurgency tactics, partly because we didn't have the troop levels to support them once we did—it will likely prompt the Army, and many conservatives, to try to write off counterinsurgency for another generation.

This would be ill-advised for two reasons. One, insurgencies are defeatable. Max Boot notes that post–World War II guerrilla fighters have been defeated in Italy, Spain, Northern Ireland, Greece, the Philippines, Malaya, Turkey, El Salvador, Kenya, Guatemala, and Mexico, among other places. Two, if we lose in Iraq, it will put an even greater premium on insurgency warfare, as our enemies will realize it's the surest way to frustrate us. So we will have to either scale back our geopolitical ambitions or learn how to fight insurgents after all.

President Bush believes he is learning from Vietnam, but in misunderstanding that war—and absenting himself from decisions of the utmost consequence—he may be playing his role in a repeat of it. **NR**

■ THE NATION

A Bicentennial, Blown?

The question of Lincoln and 2009

JOHN J. MILLER

NEARLY a hundred years ago, a group of distinguished Americans gathered to honor the centennial of Abraham Lincoln's birth. Their ideas and determination eventually led to the construction of the Lincoln Memorial—one of the nation's most beloved examples of commemorative architecture. It's on the list of must-see tourist attractions in Washington, and it provided a stirring backdrop to the greatest speech of the civil-rights era. For government work, that's not too shabby.

To build on this legacy, Congress established an Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission six years ago. When the 200th anniversary of the 16th president's birth arrives in 2009, the commission will have had almost a decade to prepare. The president, whoever he (or she) is, probably will make a big speech about national unity and equal opportunity. A few teachers will insist that children read the Gettysburg Address (four score and seven years ago, of course, a lot of students actually had to *memorize* it). There has even been talk of Steven Spielberg's directing a biopic about Lincoln, starring Liam Neeson.

Yet most of this commemoration will not be the work of the bicentennial commission, which is well on its way to becoming a spectacular flop. Its combination of poor leadership, lackluster vision, and regional factionalism contrasts sharply with what Lincoln himself stood for. "This is a classic example of a petty, politicized commission that will accomplish next to nothing," says Matthew Spalding of the Heritage Foundation. "This massive injustice to Lincoln and his legacy, ironically, occurs at a time when interest in great historical figures like Lincoln is high."

Thankfully, the bicentennial commission hasn't come at a huge cost to taxpayers: Its current annual budget is only about $600,000, which goes mostly to pay the salaries of a few employees and cover their modest overhead. Since its creation, the commission has consumed just $2.4 million—the Department of Education probably spent more on pencils last month. But even such a meager public investment deserves to be handled better. "Friends used to ask me what the commission does," says a former employee. "I couldn't really answer the question because we frankly didn't do much of anything." The group's greatest accomplishment has been to push legislation authorizing four new designs on the "tails" side of the Lincoln penny. Citizens Against Government Waste has placed the commission in its "Pig Book" of congressional pork-barrel projects for six years running. "I don't think it's going to come off anytime soon," says David Williams of CAGW. That's for sure: According to an internal document, the commissioners want their federal appropriation to triple over the next four years.

Yet the goal of the commission isn't to become a budget-buster. It seeks to finance a range of projects by leveraging the resources of third parties, from private corporations and philanthropists to grant-making arms of the federal government such as the National Endowment for the Humanities. Last year, the commission produced a "strategic plan" of Lincoln-related activities—a wish list of what it would like to sponsor or promote in coming years. The total price tag amounted to $97 million. More than half of this is supposed to be donated in the form of "in-kind media," such as public-service advertisements provided by the Ad Council. The remaining $47 million is expected to come from other sources, and much of it is for questionable purposes: $5 million for a series of town-hall meetings co-sponsored by the NAACP and the National Council of La Raza, $1 million for a television documentary, $600,000 for "bicentennial-themed bronze medallions for placement at Lincoln-named facilities throughout the country," and $100,000 for "a new musical work that communicates the theme of the bicentennial." There are also several allegedly cost-free events, including a "Lincoln Highway Rally" that is described as a "coast to coast rally of antique cars on Hwy 30 and I-80."

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The money isn't exactly rolling in. The commission refuses to say publicly how much cash it has raised, but as of several months ago it had not even reached six-figure territory, let alone millions or tens of millions of dollars. "If you have an imagination deficit, a financial deficit will follow," says a source familiar with the commission's workings. "We're still in the early stages," admits Harold Holzer, a co-chairman of the commission along with Sen. Dick Durbin and Rep. Ray LaHood, both of Illinois. "We may be a bit behind schedule." Time is running out: The commission expects the Lincoln festivities to begin in February 2008—only a little more than a year from now.

The panel's fundamental problem is its composition. Its 15 commissioners are appointed by the president or Congress. A few of them lend the body some gravitas: Holzer is an impresario among Lincoln enthusiasts, Gabor Boritt is a prominent scholar, and Frank J. Williams is chief justice of the Supreme Court of Rhode Island and the author of well-regarded books on Lincoln. The rest are a mishmash of politicians, academics, and patronage appointees. Jean T. D. Bandler is a social worker whose claim to fame is that she is the daughter of Paul Douglas, who was a senator from Illinois in the 1950s and 1960s. Sen. Jim Bunning, the Kentucky Republican, holds a seat on the commission but rarely attends its meetings.

As a group, the commission lacks both the will and the expertise to raise money for its gold-plated agenda. Several commissioners have conflicting interests because they fundraise for other Lincoln endeavors, such as the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield, Ill., and the Lincoln Museum in Ft. Wayne, Ind. "There are limits to what we can do," says Holzer, who explains that he doesn't fundraise for anything but the Metropolitan Museum of Art, where he is a senior vice president. Even the politicians, who presumably know a thing or two about asking strangers for money, have bowed out. "Durbin and LaHood have refused to have anything to do with fundraising," says one insider. "There just aren't any heavyweights who can play the role of rainmaker." Missing entirely from the commission are leaders from the business or foundation world.

Perhaps the commission would be able to overcome these weaknesses if its members didn't squabble so much. They illustrate why Lincoln aficionados have earned a reputation for jealous infighting. "It's as if the Civil War never ended," complains a member of the commission's own advisory

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ROMAN GENN

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board. This is partly because Lincoln remains a touchstone for modern arguments about race, civil rights, federalism, war powers, and so on. Recent controversies about him—Was he gay? Did he need Prozac?—probably reveal more about our own obsessions than they do about the historical Lincoln. Far thornier, however, are the politics of who owns Lincoln: Is he a national figure or do Kentucky, Indiana, and Illinois have a special claim on him because he lived there? There is a tug-of-war between one group of commissioners, who would like to raise $8 million for a sculpture garden of Lincoln statuary in Washington's National Arboretum, and others who favor shoveling money into Springfield. A commission divided cannot stand, and in May the failure to solve these disagreements led to the ouster of executive director Michael Bishop. "It was disgraceful, how the commissioners blamed him for their own incompetence," says another advisory board member. Over the summer, the commission actually brought in a professional facilitator to try to smooth relations.

Sadly, Abe Lincoln didn't have the option of recommending that secessionist leaders enroll in anger-management counseling. He had to fight a war to save the Union, and his profound devotion to this cause turned him into one of the nation's most revered leaders. He is a constant presence in our lives, with a face that's printed on currency and etched into Mt. Rushmore. The National Park Service estimates that about 4 million people visit his memorial in Washington annually. This year, two books about Lincoln—*Team of Rivals* by Doris Kearns Goodwin and *Manhunt* by James Swanson—have hit the best-seller lists. (The Goodwin book reportedly will serve as the basis for the Spielberg film.) The *Wall Street Journal* recently noted that more books have been written about Lincoln than any other president; George Washington, the man who is reputedly "first in the hearts of his countrymen," finishes a distant second.

This sky-high popularity raises a question: Do we really need a top-down federal commission to promote the commemoration of Lincoln, or are ordinary Americans already doing a perfectly adequate job of honoring him from the bottom up? It turns out that the mystic chords of memory may not require a taxpayer subsidy. **NR**

PHIL NOBLE/REUTERS

■ **CULTURE WATCH**

Veiled Threat

Why it may be important to see a woman's face

THEODORE DALRYMPLE

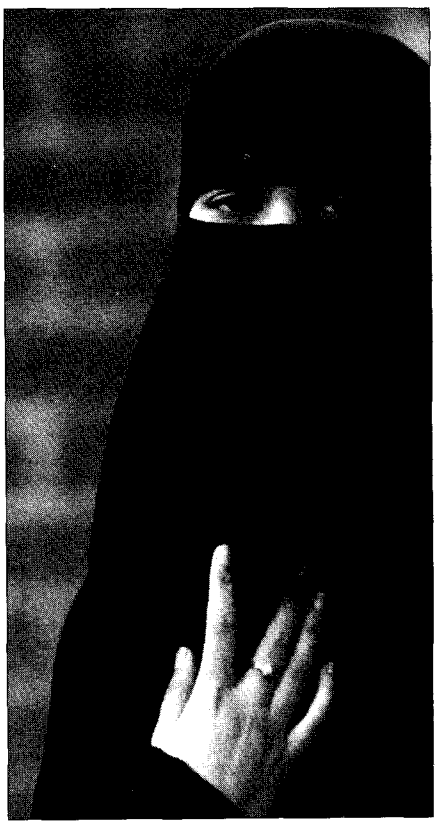
Not long ago in the hospital in which I once worked, a young male nurse was asked by the administration to remove the ironmongery with which he had recently adorned his face and ears. He was outraged by this assault on his inalienable right to mutilate himself in any way that he chose, which he believed to be narrow-minded. He was, after all, the owner of his face and ears in fee simple; they were his to dispose of as he saw fit.

As it happens, he was a decent and dedicated young man, albeit one with the bad taste natural to youth; and in the end he complied with the administration's demand, and removed his savage adornments. But he nevertheless remained convinced that an injustice had been done him and his rights trampled upon. He found it difficult to grasp that the administration were not saying to him that he could not put rings through his nose, eyebrows, and ears, only that he could not do so and work as a nurse in this hospital. For him, a right was not really a right unless its exercise was completely free of unwanted consequences.

This case illustrates the part-modern, part-medieval mentality of Aishah Azmi, the 23-year-old teaching assistant in Britain whose insistence on her right to wear the niqab—the black garment that leaves only the eyes visible—in British classrooms provoked the former foreign secretary, Jack Straw, to comment that the wearing of such garments should be discouraged because they are socially divisive and hinder the integration of Muslims into British society.

Miss Azmi, of course, stands upon her rights, and intends to contest, at the highest possible level, her dismissal from the Church of England school where she was once employed. (I can just imagine a Christian teaching assistant at a madrassah demanding the right to wear a miniskirt there!) This proves how partly Westernized Miss Azmi's mentality is: for her concept of rights unencumbered by any consequences was precisely that of the male nurse who put rings through his features. The fact that she appears to have insisted upon the niqab at the behest of a fatwa issued by a fundamentalist Muslim cleric does not alter this.

Oddly enough, in certain circumstances the niqab is an aid not to female modesty (its supposed justification) but to female promiscuity. A Saudi doctor once told me that, since in many Saudi households the female quarters were separated from the male quarters, and since even a husband could not enter the female quarters if a strange female was visiting his wife (as indicated by a pair of shoes outside the door), male lovers



Who dat?

Mr. Dalrymple is a contributing editor of *City Journal* and the author, most recently, of *Romancing Opiates: Pharmacological Lies and the Addiction Bureaucracy.*

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would adopt the niqab, plant some shoes outside the door, and commit adultery in perfect security.

A desire for extramarital affairs in perfect secrecy, however, is unlikely to be Miss Azmi's motive in her insistence upon her supposed right. Perhaps she truly believes that the sight of an inch of her uncovered flesh would so inflame the sexual appetites of any man that an illicit liaison with him would become inevitable; if so, this seems rather the negation of female modesty than its affirmation.

What is clear is that the niqab is not religiously required: If it were, the majority of Muslim women, who do not wear it, would have to be accounted bad Muslims, and Miss Azmi's insistence on the niqab would be a reproach to them. Muslim women who did not wear the niqab would be hypocrites at best, and apostates as worst, and neither category is highly regarded in Muslim tradition.

Many people find it difficult to believe that a young woman would voluntarily don such a demeaning costume as a niqab, and therefore believe that Miss Azmi has been put up to it by sinister, Islamic fundamentalist forces. I do not think it is necessary to resort to a conspiracy theory to account for her behavior, though such conspiracies undoubtedly exist. For example, the dean of a medical school told me that he had recently been confronted with the problem of what to do with four female Muslim students who suddenly started to attend classes in niqabs.

Fortunately, he was able to find a regulation, dating back to the 19th century (so that the question of anti-Muslim discrimination could not arise), to the effect that no doctor or medical student might examine a patient without revealing his face to him. The dean was able to tell the four medical students either to remove their niqabs or leave the medical school.

The four students complied and removed their niqabs. After they had done so, they returned to the dean and told him that they had never wanted to don the niqab in the first place, but were intimidated into doing so by male Muslim students of fundamentalist persuasion. Nothing is easier than to blackmail a young female Muslim student: You just threaten to tell her parents that she is leading a dissolute life, whereupon they would do the necessary.

The sincerity or otherwise of Miss Azmi is, of course, beside the point. Fools can be found to support anything, and no doubt you can find slaves who kiss the lash that keeps them enslaved. The social meaning of the niqab is what counts.

An interesting photograph of Miss Azmi was published as she left her house with her husband. (When I say it was Miss Azmi, I—like everyone else—am taking it on trust that it was in fact she.) Had her niqab been white, she would have looked like a pantomime ghost. By contrast, her husband was dressed exactly like the Marlboro man, all in denim. Apart from his complexion, there was nothing in his appearance that suggested he was not a native of Montana.

In other words, there are two dress codes in play, one for men and one for women; and the fact of the matter is that it is always the male who is dressed in the Western fashion and the female in the severely Muslim fashion. (I should, however, mention that a large proportion of Muslim women of Pakistani origin dress in extremely becoming clothes that are not demeaning and are vastly superior in point of elegance to those worn by 99 percent of Western women, and that my own wife sometimes adopts them.) You never see a Muslim woman dressed in Western clothes accompanied by a man in traditional Muslim attire.

The fact of the matter is that many Muslim women in Britain and elsewhere in Europe live in what one might call a micro-totalitarian climate. It is in the nature of the case that it is difficult to estimate how many or what proportion, as difficult in its way as to gauge public opinion in North Korea. Choice is not for them; if they do not do what they are told, and do not comply with certain customs whether they want to or not, for example of marriage to a first cousin back "home" in Pakistan upon whom they have never previously set eyes, they are severely chastised and may even be subject to "honor" killings. The effect of such killings is disproportionate to their num-

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ber, just as lynchings were in the southern states. Their demonstration effect is considerable.

Many young Muslim women attempt suicide or make suicidal gestures because of forthcoming forced marriages, but virtually no young men do. This suggests, at the very least, that while the whole system suits men very well, it does not suit women, or at least those women who, having been brought up in the West, know that something else is possible.

Likewise, if you go to the center of any British city on a Saturday night, you will see many groups of young Muslim men taking part in the crude, coarse, and vulgar delights of British popular culture, but you will not see any young Muslim women doing so. (Recently in Brussels, I witnessed the same phenomenon: lots of young men of Moroccan origin enjoying the degraded festivities of the city by night, and the young women emerging in their headscarves in the morning.) The young Muslim men have no objections to promiscuity and prostitution as such, provided it is among infidel women, but want to preserve their sisters and wives for a life of domestic subjugation.

This is the reality—or perhaps I should say a reality, since no reality encompasses the whole—in which the debate over the niqab is taking place. In essence, Mr. Straw was quite right in his observations. Moreover, the purpose of the niqab is not to comply with religious duties, but to maintain the domestic peace of Muslim men by ensuring the separation of Muslim women from the rest of society.

One might question the bona fides of Mr. Blair in his support of Mr. Straw. After all, his wife, a prominent lawyer, went to the highest court in the land to defend the right of a schoolgirl to attend school in distinctively unrevealing Muslim dress, not coincidentally just before an election when Mr. Blair needed the Muslim vote. His party resorted during a general election to mildly anti-Semitic propaganda in areas with large numbers of Muslims when the opposition candidate was Jewish. His government de facto removed the vote from Muslim women by extending postal voting in areas with a high Muslim population. But a good argument is a good argument; whatever their motives, Messrs. Straw and Blair are in this instance right. **NR**

■ **CULTURE WATCH II**

Bloody Nonsense

When diamonds are a propagandist's best friend

JACK JOLIS

In the halcyon, prelapsarian, pre-9/11 closing days of the last century, the attention of the sentient public was temporarily directed to a pair of particularly gruesome and loosely connected civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone in West Africa.

The atavistic nature of these conflicts was reflected in the preferred weapon used: the lowly machete, which resulted in horrifying yet visually compelling images of amputated innocents. These civil wars were eventually "sorted out" by the efficient neocolonialist intervention of 4,000 excellent, if exasperated and reluctant, British special troops in Sierra Leone, and by a somewhat tardier and sloppier U.S.-led and -financed U.N. "peace-brokering" operation in Liberia.

The fact that the chief villain in these jungle rumbles—Liberia's thug-president, Charles Taylor—had numbered some dealings with the area's Lebanese diamond merchants among his many other corruptions provided certain agenda-laden Western NGOs with the perfect pretext to launch a high-profile PR blitz against the diamond business, suddenly re-dubbed the "conflict" or "blood" diamond trade.

Seemingly overnight, the diamond-buying and -wearing public was subjected to a media barrage of deceptively plausible (yet empirically baseless) propaganda in which, via articles, TV specials, books, films, and even, ineluctably, rap lyrics, the notion was planted in Conventional Wisdom that diamonds were an integral part—the source of funding and even the *casus belli*—of these otherwise seemingly inexplicable African conflicts. Whereas the truth was, and remains: If there were not a single diamond produced on the African continent, there would not be one fewer war there, nor one fewer human victim thereof.

After 9/11, the non-issue of "blood diamonds" was brusquely eclipsed by *force majeure* and allowed to die down. But now, the release of a "major" and "controversial" new film, *Blood Diamond*, threatens to reignite the whole invidiously manufactured hysteria.

Now, Americans' knowledge of Africa in general is sketchy at best, and nonexistent at worst. Our ignorance concerning the "diamond business" is even greater. (Most Americans, for example, think of diamonds as chiefly an African product, when in fact more than half the world's diamonds are currently produced outside of Africa.) Indeed, this climate of incomprehension surrounding "blood diamonds in Africa" can take on tragicomic proportions: I invite those of masochistic tendency to examine the largely incoherent contribution of Rep. Cynthia McKinney (D., Ga.), who, in 2000, furiously and hilariously vented on the subject from her perch at the Trade Subcommittee of the House Ways and Means Committee. (I appeared before this subcommittee, and listened—in stunned amusement—to her harangue.) When this pervasive geocluelessness is strained through the delirious prism of Hollywood's imagination—with history and reality reprocessed by such propagandists as Oliver Stone, George Clooney, and Michael Moore—the result can be genuinely demented.

And so it is, in this new movie. The eponymous conflict-funding "Blood Diamond" ends up in the hands of "white African mercenary" Danny Archer, played by . . . *Leonardo DiCaprio?* Look, for all I know DiCaprio may be a sterling fellow. And certainly in *Blood Diamond* he has armed himself with a pretty convincing S'uth Ifriken Iccent. But for him to play a cynical, bloody-handed white African mercenary? His character's insipid youthfulness would cause him difficulty in getting served in any American bar, much less being taken seriously for a bloodthirsty profiteer. This kind of role had been the reserve in the past of the hard-bitten likes of Errol Flynn, Stewart Granger, Rod

Mr. Jolis is an American independent rough-diamond expert and consultant. He is based in Europe, and has considerable experience in Africa.

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Taylor, and Richard Burton. DiCaprio might be more credible as, for example, a fresh-out-of-SAIS U.N. deputy special under-director for inter-regional human development. But a white African mercenary? I'm sorry, but . . . no.

The unconvincing actor is, actually, quite appropriately cast for what is a monumentally unconvincing and ultimately, in its underlying premise, mendacious story. For the plain fact is: Diamonds don't cause or (in any meaningful sense) fund the wars of Africa, and never have. The only blood to be found on diamonds is the symbolic blood of the "blood, sweat, and tears" invested by the hard-working artisan diamond diggers who labor in the "independent" (which is to say, not owned by industry giant De Beers) diamond fields of Africa and elsewhere—in other words, precisely those souls who would suffer if the worldwide anti–"blood diamonds" campaign ever gained serious traction. It is significant that Sierra Leone, the country in which the film supposedly takes place, contains nothing like the sort of hellish King Leopold II–cum–Gulag "forced-labor diamond fields" depicted in it: In fact, virtually all diamond mining in Sierra Leone is done by self-employed diggers or small-scale local cooperative enterprises. And, while we're discussing ironic fabrications, the country it *was* partly filmed in—totally diamond-free Mozambique—suffered an even gorier civil war, if such is imaginable, than its diamond-producing sister, Angola.

The bogus campaign against "blood diamonds" is waged by the gullible NGOs I mentioned earlier, egged on by an unholy alliance of cynical Western politicians and—for its own convoluted and paradoxical benefit—the De Beers diamond juggernaut itself. The principal NGO involved, Global Witness, is a small collection of wide-eyed London-based Pollyannas. The fact that De Beers is covertly supporting the anti–"blood diamond" project will no doubt be stoutly denied publicly, but was unofficially confirmed to me by a former senior De Beers sales executive. The campaign serves to suppress non–De Beers diamond production, while cloaking De Beers with a most welcome choirboy image.

And the diamond-industry "leadership" emerges with scarcely more credit, with its own fawning and disingenuous collusion in the "blood diamond" charade. In a long open letter to the producer of *Blood Diamond*, the pooh-bahs of the World Diamond Council cravenly agree that "the story of conflict diamonds is an important one that needs to be told," that "conflict diamonds have in the past caused great pain and suffering in a number of countries in Africa," but that now bureaucratic institutions are in place to ensure "that revenues from diamonds should never again be used to finance armed conflict."

Oh, codswallop. This is pure cowardly balderdash. The industry is self-abasingly defending itself against charges that are totally false, and the sham edifice it has erected to "solve" this non-problem—the so-called Kimberley Process—is an open joke: Among other absurdities, it has prevented diamond exports from such conflict-free diamond-producing countries as Brazil, while at the same time "certifying" such risible anomalies as "Dubai-produced diamonds." (There are no diamonds produced in Dubai.)

Diamonds were no more used to finance armed conflicts than any other source of funds. Moreover, the vast majority of Africa's many civil conflicts occur and have occurred in countries and areas where diamonds are not found or produced. And, conversely, most diamond-producing countries are conflict-free. The diamond-producing Central African Republic, for example, has always been, despite its other undoubted peculiarities, civil war–free—while its neighbors to the north and east, the utterly diamondless Chad and Sudan, have endured virtually non-stop civil wars for the past 40 years. Equally, diamonds had absolutely *nothing* to do with the bloodiest of all African carnages, Rwanda; while Africa's largest diamond producer, Botswana, is as peaceful as Iowa. Another diamond-producing country, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, does produce both civil conflict and diamonds, but the one is undertaken thousands of kilometers from the other, and by totally unconnected people.

And, in any case, the televised agonies of the limb-lopping horrors that gave rise to the whole "blood diamonds" non-story in the first place *had no need* for diamonds for their funding: The Red Chinese machetes used for the carnage cost, per dozen, literally pocket change. And AK-47s were on sale in the streets of Kinshasa in 2000 for $25. (With two loaded magazines, $35.) You don't need diamonds, "blood" or otherwise, to fund *this* arsenal, or, for that matter, to supply the locally grown ganga with which the "troops" are mostly paid.

Finally, many of the same Lebanese capos who control the diamonds of Sierra Leone, the *Blood Diamond* poster-country, also control the country's even richer natural resource, fishing—but are we inflicted with a global campaign against "blood fish"? Indeed, it makes about as much sense to blame the "funding" of African civil mayhem on the diamond trade as it does to blame the funding of international Islamist mayhem on the construction trade, since that is where bin Laden got the millions with which he set up al-Qaeda. (In fact, it makes a good deal *less* sense, since between bin Laden's terrorism and his family construction business, a money trail actually *exists*.)

To paraphrase the old Second Amendment truism: Diamonds don't kill Africans. Jumped-up barbarian maniacs with imported ideological agendas kill Africans. **NR**

WARNER BROS. PICTURES

Leonardo DiCaprio and Djimon Hounsou in Blood Diamond

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INVESTOR'S BUSINESS DAILY®

ISSUES & INSIGHTS

Raise The Shields, Congress

Military Superiority: As North Korea and Iran become nuclear threats, Russia objects to the possible deployment of U.S. defense systems in Poland. But then, so do the Democrats. What would Ronald Reagan do?

Six editorials a day, 30 a week, 132 a month on the most important topics of our time... more than twice what you'll find elsewhere.

Russia, which was supposed to be a partner in the six-party talks to rein in the North Korean missile and nuclear threat, objected Tuesday to the possible deployment of U.S. missile defense components to deal with that very threat.

The Bush administration would like to deploy 10 interceptor missiles and an anti-missile radar in Europe to reinforce our defense against a missile launch against the U.S. or its allies from a rogue state such as Iran or North Korea.

Two countries that were once part of the Soviet empire, Poland and the Czech Republic, have indicated willingness to host such a deployment.

"We see this as an element of destabilizing the situation, an attempt to change the strategic balance," Russian Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov told a news conference.

We've heard this before. We heard it when President Reagan first announced the Strategic Defense Initiative in 1983. We heard it when the Gipper deployed Pershing missiles in West Germany in response to the Soviet SS-20 threat. We heard it when we withdrew from the useless straightjacket called the ABM Treaty. For that matter, we hear it from Democrats today.

Hunter: Putting SDI on a fast track.

Fortunately, Reagan paid the *Soviets no heed, and the days of* the Evil Empire were numbered from that point on. It collapsed in part under the strain of an arms race it could not win. Today the Axis of Evil is on the march, and while President Bush has made missile defense a priority, a Manhattan Project-type effort is needed to fulfill Reagan's dream of preventing an attack rather than avenging it.

California Rep. Duncan Hunter, head of the House Armed Services Committee, said Tuesday that in response to North Korea's nuclear test, lawmakers negotiating the Pentagon's fiscal 2007 budget added $100 million for Aegis ballistic missile defense SM-3 interceptors and Aegis system development. But more funds are needed for faster deployment, he said.

In a letter to Bush, Hunter said, "I recommend strongly that the executive branch submit to Congress both a proposal that states what steps are necessary to accomplish such an acceleration and a request to reprogram the necessary funds."

Hunter added, "I also believe that the United States must take immediate steps to develop and deploy systems that are capable of addressing the full range of North Korean missile-based threats to the United States, our deployed forces and our allies."

One, and often two, cartoons a day from Pulitzer Prize winner Michael Ramirez, IBD's Editorial Cartoonist and a Senior Editor.

In addition to the sea-based Aegis system being deployed on American destroyers and cruisers, our missile defense consists of 11 interceptors deployed in silos at Fort Greeley, Alaska, and at Vandenberg Air Force Base in California. And in addition to a possible site in Poland, Japan might be very receptive these days.

The Army's Terminal High Altitude Area Defense has proved it can hit enemy ballistic missiles and was recently moved from the U.S. mainland to Hawaii, a possible North *Korean target, for further testing. We say:* Get a move on, guys. And by that we mean Congress.

The biggest objectors to defending the U.S. against enemy missiles are not the Russians, but the Democrats. Their hall of shame on this issue includes senators like Joe Biden, Jack Reed, Robert Byrd, Ted Kennedy, Chuck Schumer and Carl Levin. Sen. John Kerry has voted against missile defense pro-

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Can You Trust The National Media

The first editorial in this series showed how different surveys at different times verified that 86% of journalists in America's most powerful national media vote Democratic in presidential elections and are far more liberal than our voting public.

Now we'll give you evidence of how these journalists distort your news coverage and slant issues so that they trash Republican presidential candidates while aiding liberal Democratic candidates, their causes and their policies.

In her explosive 1972 book, "The News *Twisters," Edith Efron was the first to tape, tran*scribe and analyze every ABC, CBS and NBC prime-time nightly news show just before a national election.

PART THREE IN A SERIES

She found that from Sept. 16 to Election Day in 1968, ABC dispensed 7,493 words "against" the Republican candidate, Richard Nixon, and 896 words "for" – an 8-to-1 ratio. NBC's word count was 4,334 against and 431 for (10-to-1). CBS was the most biased, dishing out 5,300 words against and 320 for – a 16-to-1 ratio of bad press to good.

Meanwhile, the liberal Democratic candidate, Hubert Humphrey, was the subject of more positive words and was consequently treated more fairly.

In the 1984 presidential election, when Walter Mondale challenged incumbent Ronald Reagan, the same three network prime-time news shows were taped and dissected from Labor Day to Election Day by Maura Clancy and Michael Robinson. They focused only on those reports in which the "spin" for or against each candidate was unambiguous.

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fell asleep at meetings, was cut off from the public, was insensitive and said dumb things. There was 13 times more evening news comment wher Reagan supposedly lost his first debate with Mondale than there was after he won the second.

Leading up to Reagan's re-election run, the Institute for Applied Economics surveyed how network news shows treated economic news during the strong recovery in the last half of 1983. It discovered that "nearly 95% of the economic statistics were positive, yet 86% of the networks' stories were primarily negative."

*In what amounted to a dishonest misrepresenta*tion of highly positive economic news, the networks concentrated coverage on people left behind by the recovery and the few regions still suffering from higher unemployment.

More recently, we have the courageous 2002 book, "Bias," by Bernard Goldberg, a CBS reporter and producer for 28 years who exposes in an airtight case how liberal bias overwhelms straight news.

Goldberg tells of how journalists determine what news they want to cover and the slant they want to impart. More damaging, they determine what news to minimize, bury or keep mum.

"They take sides," Goldberg said. "A reporter can find an expert to say anything the reporter wants – anything! Just keep calling until one says what you need him to say. It happens all the time."

They also assign labels, Goldberg wrote. ABC's Peter Jennings, for example, referred to certain *senators as very conservative but never referred* to Democrats Tom Daschle or Barbara Boxer as liberals. A far-left professor is just a "noted law professor."

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›er Think This Way?

It Takes A Bureaucracy

Food Safety: Hillary Clinton and other Democrats have called for a new agency to police America's meat and produce. Would this really protect us from E. coli?

To put the question another way: Do new bureaucrats beget more and better food inspectors? There's no reason they should, and good reasons they would not.

But creating a new agency invariably makes its creators look good, at least in their own eyes. Legislation to reorganize and refocus federal efforts, apparently without spending much more money, is a common tack for responding to the public's fear. The politicians seem to be doing something, and you can always find some activists out there to applaud them for giving their cause a higher profile.

The new push for a stand-alone federal food safety administration dovetails with a wave of alarming news about spinach, lettuce, beef and canned carrot juice. Clinton, along with fellow New York Sen. Chuck Schumer, is cosponsoring a bill authored by Sen. Dick Durbin, D-Ill., to set up the new agency for inspections and other duties now done by the Food and Drug Administration and the Agriculture Department.

In their view, the current system is a dangerously disorganized hodgepodge of agencies "butting heads," as Schumer puts it.

But what's really wrong now? A closer inspection of the latest food news shows that the current safeguards clearly failed in only one case. That was the outbreak of E. coli on fresh spinach, which has taken three lives at last count.

Four botulism cases in Florida connected with canned carrot juice may have been due at least partly to improper handling – failure to refrigerate – by consumers, not producers. A recall of green-leaf lettuce earlier this month was initiated as a precaution by a grower who found E. coli in irrigation water. No one is known to have been harmed by eating the lettuce.

The beef recall also was voluntary. Last week, an Iowa company recalled 5,200 pounds of ground beef suspected of carrying E. coli. As with the lettuce, no illnesses have been reported from consumption of the meat.

To judge from this recent track record, we'd conclude that most of the food safety apparatus is working and that safety is a shared responsibility, requiring some common sense and attention to labels on consumers' part.

In the one confirmed breakdown – the spinach outbreak – the FDA had the safety jurisdiction and will need to reassess its procedures. It also might have to add or redeploy inspectors. But it's not so dysfunctional that it needs a total makeover. And nothing in the news indicates that the USDA, which oversees meat and poultry, is falling down on the job.

One good reason to refrain from a total makeover is that the reorganization itself saps time and energy from the agencies' real mission. Another is that putting a well-run agency under new management can degrade its performance.

Take the case of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, which was well-regarded before it was folded into the Homeland Security Department. After that, to put the matter gently, it stumbled.

Politicians of the Clinton-Schumer-Durbin stripe look for bureaucratic cures to most of the nation's ills. If they get their way and fix what ain't broke in our food inspection system, their remedy could actually make us sick.

Reid It And Weep

Scandal: As the FBI raids Curt Weldon's daughter's house, Harry Reid's sons have benefited from their father's influence undisturbed. Meanwhile, Reid puts campaign funds to personal use and seeks a do-over on his ethics statements.

We never cease to be amazed at the double standard applied to the morals and ethics of Democrats and Republicans in Congress. We've already commented on how Republican Mark Foley was forced to resign for sending lewd e-mails to congressional pages, while Democrat Gerry Studds received mere censure and standing ovations after actually having sex with one, being allowed to serve until he decided to retire.

But the case of Senate Minority Leader Reid is a double standard on steroids. The latest episode is his request to file an "amended" ethics statement after the Associated Press revealed he made $1.1 million on a $400,000 investment on property he hadn't owned for three years; it was the subject of an earlier editorial on these pages.

In a statement issued after the AP story, Reid said: "I directed my staff to file amended financial disclosure forms noting that in 2001 I transferred title to the land to a Limited Liability Corporation."

Reid said he agreed to file the amended reports because, "I believe in ensuring all facts come to light." And if you believe that, the senator probably has some oceanfront property in Nevada to sell you.

We've also reported on Reid's questionable involvement and compensation in another Nevada real-estate deal involving lobbyist and developer Harvey Whittemore, who plied Reid with campaign contributions and employed Reid family members. In return, Reid greased the skids for Whittemore, who made millions in profits once inconvenient environmental obstacles were overcome.

In June 2003, the Los Angeles Times chronicled how Reid supported measures promoted by one of his sons and his son-in-law, both lobbyists for Nevada interests. Reid did not volunteer to colleagues or the press how the sometimes obscure provisions he authored and inserted into legislation benefited clients that paid his son and son-in-law $2 million in lobbying fees.

We presume Reid's amended disclosure forms would also include his using campaign donations instead of personal funds to pay Christmas bonuses for the support staff at the Ritz-Carlton in Washington, where he maintains a luxury condominium.

When questioned by the AP about this and other ethical lapses, Reid responded that he would put these particular cookies back in the jar by personally reimbursing his campaign treasury.

Federal election law prohibits candidates from converting political donations to personal use. Reid explains that his listing of these bonuses to Ritz-Carlton employees as campaign "salary" was a mere "clerical

IBD isn't – and never has been – a card-carrying member of the mainstream media.

Fencing In Human Captial

Latin America: Mexico's leaders have good reason to fear internal unrest if the U.S. builds a border wall. That's obvious enough in their fervent opposition to it. But in reality, they can't afford not to have it.

Mexico wasn't always an exporter of its most enterprising people. Just 30 years ago, those who left were viewed as near traitors who abandoned their country.

In the 1960s, Mexico's government had a hand in ending the earlier "bracero" guest-worker program in the U.S. But when Mexico started encouraging emigration as its economic policy a decade or two ago, substituting that for development, Mexico won the dubious honor as the world leader in export of its citizens, according to the International Labor Organization.

By the time President Vicente Fox declared Mexican emigrants "heroes," 400,000 were crossing illegally into the U.S. each year. And to him, well, they *were* heroes. Out of sight in El Norte, they had jobs and sent back $20 billion a year in remittances with no time for protests. Everybody happy.

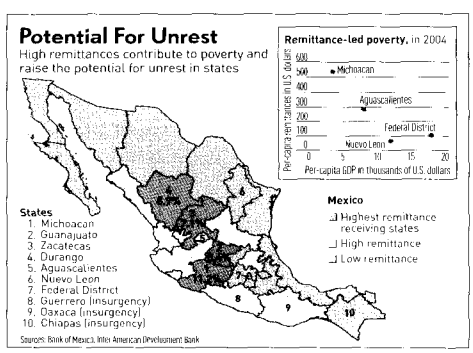
But that makeshift policy that emptied rural Mexican towns and drained brains is beginning to reach its limit.

Mexico's Central Bank Gov. Guillermo Ortiz touched on this recently when in Dallas he declared support for a border fence, warning that no nation can afford to lose its human capital indefinitely.

The problem goes much deeper than that.

Once again, the Central Bank of Mexico is on top of this, well ahead of the rest of the Mexican government.

"Evidence also suggests that members of recipient households have fewer incentives to search for alternative sources of income," the bank noted, describing a burgeoning private welfare culture.



The Inter-American Development Bank identified 10 high and four very-high remittance states, all in central Mexico.

Michoacan state boasts Mexico's highest remittance dependency, the IADB says, with 11.2% of all households receiving remittances. The accompanying central bank chart shows it is among the least developed states. Three other central states – Zacatecas, Guanajuato and Durango – also have high dependency on remittances.

The IADB says people most likely to emigrate illegally are neither the highest-income people nor the lowest, but the high-

ason University economist Tyler g fees up to $2,000 are an almost 's poorest to scrape up.

gher expectations. If a wall were ger a social-pressure valve for s just might revolt.

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■ BRITAIN

The Thatcherites

Or, as they would have said, the IEA-ites

JOHN O'SULLIVAN

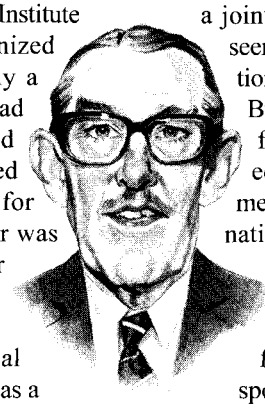
In the early 1960s the Institute of Economic Affairs in London invited those Tory MPs favorable to the free market to a discussion on promoting their ideas in politics. It was a distressingly small gathering. For this was the heyday of the post-war social-democratic consensus in Britain. Prime Minister Harold Macmillan dominated the political scene with aristocratic style and "unflappable" dash. His nickname, invented by a despairing left-wing columnist, Vicky, was "Supermac." His political skills were so deft that he was often compared to a magician. And as Balfour said of Gladstone, Macmillan was a Tory in everything except essentials.

In his youth, he had been a firm supporter of state ownership, government-organized cartels, paternalism, and corporatism. And when an exchange-rate crisis hit in 1961, Macmillan seized it as an opportunity. He introduced the full panoply of corporatism—price and wage controls, "indicative planning," industrial cartelization, and regional subsidies, all under the benign sway of "Neddy" and "Nicky" (i.e., the National Economic Development Council and the National Incomes Commission).

It was against this background that the Tory free-marketeers held their meeting. One MP said regretfully that the real problem was that the ordinary voter liked nationalization and state control as havens against economic uncertainty. This gloom provoked an outburst of irritated eloquence from the one woman present.

"If you can't persuade the British housewife that she gets better value for money from Marks & Spencer than from the [socialist] Co-Op or the [state-owned] Post Office, then you shouldn't be in politics," said Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, ordinary British housewife and apprentice world-historical figure. "She knows this already in her bones. All you have to do is to draw it to her attention. Surely *that* isn't beyond your powers." Thatcher went on to make the case for market economics in homespun terms, berated her fellow Tories for their timidity a few more times, and sent them back to the House of Commons in an unusually optimistic frame of mind. Here was the nanny to end the Nanny State, they felt, and a rather fetching nanny at that.

Two of the men around the table that day, neither of them Tories, analyzed their guest somewhat differently. Ralph Harris and Arthur Seldon, respectively the director and editorial director of the Institute of Economic Affairs, recognized that Thatcher was potentially a major political figure. She had intelligence, shrewdness, and courage. But they also sensed that she was not yet ready for prime time. Though Thatcher was undoubtedly a firm believer in free enterprise, her belief was almost instinctive. She advocated it in the conventional terms of Tory politics, namely as a safeguard against the inefficiency of nationalized industries. She had only a dim consciousness of the intellectual case for economic freedom as developed by such modern classical liberals as Hayek and Friedman. Ralph and Arthur set out to provide her with an education in that philosophy. Of course, Thatcher was to get no more than an individualized version of a product they were selling to the rest of Britain.



Ralph Harris

The story of how the IEA was established is well known to American libertarians. A former Battle of Britain pilot and chicken farmer, Antony Fisher, asked Hayek for advice on promoting market freedoms. Hayek had long argued that "secondhand dealers" in ideas such as journalists were at least as important as creative theorists in winning intellectual battles. He advised Fisher to establish an institute dedicated to economic liberty that would hold seminars, publish pamphlets, and conduct studies demonstrating the superiority of capitalism over state control. Fisher devoted his modest fortune to establishing the IEA and to hiring Ralph and Arthur to run it. They set up shop in 1957 with an annual budget of $5,500.

For the next 30 years the IEA fought the good fight in a bipartisan spirit and according to the highest academic standards. Each pamphlet they published seemed to be slightly more influential than the last. Their Hobart lunches—held every Friday to debate the issues raised in their latest pamphlet—created a community of classical-liberal writers and journalists in the heart of Westminster. Above all, they introduced the latest thinking and experience from Chicago, New Zealand, or Hong Kong to the British.

Arthur died more than a year ago after an illness; Ralph died of a sudden heart attack last month. Their achievement was a joint one, and it would be neither seemly nor sensible to try to apportion the credit for it between them. But one can disentangle their different contributions. Arthur edited the IEA publications with a mean blue pencil, ruthlessly eliminating economic jargon, to make them both readable and intellectually unassailable—and eventually extraordinarily influential. Ralph raised funds, spoke and debated widely, wrote for the national press, hosted the institute's events, and in general embodied the institute in the public mind.

The dyspeptic Carlyle once described the great 19th-century Liberal statesman Richard Cobden as an "inspired bagman with his calico millennium." Ralph would have delighted in this description. It would not have been quite accurate—there were Anglican and Tory aspects to Ralph's personality—but it does capture the paradox that the pragmatic prescriptions of the dismal science were for 30 years spread in Britain by a charming, witty, lively, and thoroughly good-natured chap who had more than a touch of eccentricity. Shortly after I met Ralph in the Sixties, someone mentioned to me that he was part of "the magic circle." Since that phrase then meant the inner circle of Tory leaders like Macmillan, I doubted this was so.

"No, no," said my informant. "I mean the Magic Circle, capital M, capital C. He's a magician. He does conjuring tricks at children's parties." So Ralph was a conjurer too and, unlike Macmillan, one whose tricks actually worked.

DARREN GYGI

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In addition to his IEA work, Ralph was for many years the secretary of the Mont Pelerin Society, an international gathering of classical liberals founded by Hayek, Friedman, and a handful of others in the discouraging socialist atmosphere of 1947. His work for the MPS—which made him many friends around the world—also meant that he was aware of the latest developments in liberal economic thought abroad. Through the IEA he imported into British debate such concepts as the "public-choice economics" of Buchanan and Tullock and the counter-revolution in monetary economics developed by Friedman. These dramatically altered the British debate on both sides of the political aisle.

A Friedman lecture on monetarism was followed by an IEA dinner at which the American was subjected to an intensive and hostile cross-examination by the London *Times*'s economic correspondent, one Peter Jay. Ralph felt that Jay had crossed over the line of politeness and later apologized to Friedman.

"Not at all," replied Friedman. "He was perfectly polite, just tough. Nothing wrong in that. Besides, I like debating people like Peter. He's clever. He'll come over to our side."

A few years later Jay, by then the son-in-law of Labour prime minister Jim Callaghan, wrote the sentence in Callaghan's speech to the annual Labour conference that repudiated 30 years of official Keynesianism and advanced the Friedmanite proposition that expanding the money supply would reduce unemployment only temporarily, at the cost of higher unemployment and higher inflation in the longer run.

By the late 1970s, Mrs. Thatcher had met almost all the great classical liberals at the IEA and sat at their feet. She proved an apt pupil. Her election as Tory leader and her appointment of Sir Keith Joseph as the great Tory re-thinker saw the Tories implement IEA programs that led to the economic transformation of Britain and the worldwide revolution of privatization. Not a bad return for an investment of $5,500 in 1957.

Ralph was the first Life Peer nominated by Mrs. Thatcher, but he always denied being a Thatcherite. Rather, he said, Mrs. Thatcher was "an IEA-ite." Well, perhaps. At a 1987 dinner celebrating the 30th anniversary of the institute's founding, Thatcher, then at the height of her political dominance, as the final speaker had to listen to about eleven previous speakers, all men, all asserting the primacy of intellectuals over politicians, all overrunning their time. After 11:00 P.M., she rose, slightly exasperated. "Gentlemen," she began, "the cock may crow but it's the hen that lays the eggs."

Ralph laughed louder than anyone (except perhaps Arthur). But then all three—Ralph, Arthur, and the prime minister—would probably agree with Ronald Reagan: "You can achieve anything in politics provided that you let someone else take the credit." **NR**

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■ COVER STORY

Conservatives On the Couch

A diagnosis

RAMESH PONNURU

CONSERVATISM is in crisis. Everyone is saying so, and everyone is right. But the nature of the crisis, its causes and possible solutions, is badly misunderstood.

The fact that Republicans are facing a tough election is not a crisis. Even if the election goes as badly as it plausibly can, Republicans will have more seats in Congress than they have had for most of the history of the modern conservative movement. Conservatism has survived worse. In 1986, Republicans lost the Senate, the only chamber of Congress they held. That election had serious consequences for conservatives: It allowed liberals to block the confirmation of Robert Bork to the Supreme Court, and thus to end conservatives' chances of reforming the federal judiciary for 20 years. But 1986 now looks like a blip in a trend line of rising conservative political strength.

This year's election looks rather like the one 20 years ago. Then, as now, a Republican president was in his sixth year of office. (In the last nine sixth-year elections, the president's party lost, on average, 34 House seats and seven Senate seats.) Then, as now, there was no sign of any ideological shift leftward by the public. Democrats are benefiting from public weariness with the GOP, not any upsurge in positive feelings toward their own party. Democratic pollster Doug Schoen says that the public has not moved in a liberal direction on any philosophical or policy issue. The factors that have led to public disenchantment with Republicans over the last two years—gas prices, scandals, the handling of Hurricane Katrina, even the Iraq War—do not signal any long-term turn away from conservatism.

Yes, even the Iraq War. Conservative opponents of the war say that its unpopularity is dragging down every other conservative cause, and that the conservative coalition should therefore jettison the neoconservatives who have been the war's most aggressive advocates. It is possible to disagree with this political judgment without taking a view of the merits of the war. Clearly the war's unpopularity is hurting conservative candidates in this fall's elections. But the question is whether this effect is specific to this year or will extend into the future. I suspect the former.

The country may now become averse to extensive foreign interventions for years, as it did after the Vietnam War. But that does not mean it will turn away from the relatively hawkish forces in American life. In the decade and a half following the fall of Saigon, hawks did quite well in American politics, if not in setting policy. In other words: The Democrats did not pay a political price for leading the country into the trauma of Vietnam; they paid a price for their too-dovish reaction to that trauma.

NEITHER BLAME NOR PANIC

Yet the argument that conservatives need to ditch the neocons to survive is far more compelling than an idea that is getting a much wider hearing: that social conservatives are to blame for the expected Republican rout. Libertarian journalist Ryan Sager has written a book, *The Elephant in the Room*, that blames a "God-and-government" alliance for wrecking conservatism and endangering the Republican party. Many other commentators, including *New York Times* columnist John Tierney and the American correspondents for *The Economist*, have echoed the claim.

It is an old chestnut. Social conservatives are blamed every time Republicans lose elections. It happened in 1992, and in 1998, and it will happen again this winter. When Republicans win big, by contrast, as in 2004, the air is thick with cries of an impending theocracy in America.

Neither the blame nor the panic is justified. It is true that President Bush would not have won reelection without religious conservatives. As Patrick Hynes points out in his book *In Defense of the Religious Right*, Christian conservatives give as many votes to Republicans as blacks and labor unions combined. As he also points out, evangelicals increased their support for Bush by 6 percentage points between 2000 and 2004. But that support was already quite high. The bottom line is that Bush owed his reelection to social conservatives mainly in the same sense that winning Republican candidates have owed their

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elections to social conservatives for the last generation.

Social conservatism is an asset to Republicans, and economic conservatism a liability. Specific issues will defy that generalization: Tax cuts are popular, and opposition to embryonic stem-cell research isn't. (National-security issues, meanwhile, have tended to help Republicans post-1968, but their importance to the electorate waxes and wanes with events.) Think back to the presidential debates of 2004. President Bush was at his most defensive when forced to talk about economic issues such as the minimum wage, outsourcing, and prescription drugs; Kerry was wobbly when talking about the social Right's two main concerns, abortion and same-sex marriage. That pattern did not result from peculiarities of the two men, but rather a shared and accurate understanding of where the votes were, and are, in this country.

A lot of voters are conservative on both social and economic questions, and a lot of voters are liberal on both. Surveys have generally (although not always) found that among the rest of the voters, more people are socially conservative and economically liberal than the reverse. Populists, so to speak, outnumber libertarians. There are a lot of voters who favor a higher minimum wage and oppose same-sex marriage, and there are not many who take both of the opposite positions.

THE POPULISTS SOUR

It is the former set of voters, the populists, who have been abandoning Republicans as the midterm elections approach. These voters were not interested in Social Security reform, a free-market conservative cause that Bush spent the first months of his second term failing to sell. Many of them have soured on the war in Iraq, or were appalled by the handling of Katrina.

Two analysts for the libertarian Cato Institute, David Boaz and David Kirby, have recently made an ambitious attempt to claim that libertarians are the swing voters at the center of American politics. Their chief evidence: The 15 percent of voters whom they identify as broadly "libertarian" gave Bush 72 percent of their votes in 2000 and only 59 percent in 2004. "President Bush's record on federal spending, the war in Iraq, expansion of entitlements, executive authority, the federal marriage amendment, and civil liberties have held little appeal for libertarians," the duo wrote.

They seem unaware that their data tell more against than for their thesis. The electorate as a whole swung toward Bush during those years: He increased his percentage of the overall vote from 48 to 51. Libertarians swung one way; the remaining 85 percent of the electorate swung the other way, and swung far enough to overwhelm the libertarians. Could it be that the same actions that alienated libertarians won Bush the support of these other voters? Well, yes, it could. Almost every serious analyst agrees that the marriage amendment netted votes for Bush.

As for the expansion of entitlements: The idea that the federal government should help to pay for prescription drugs for the elderly had strong support from almost every segment of the public, including self-described Republicans and conservatives, from the moment it was introduced to American politics. If Bush had not promised to offer a drug plan of his own in 2000, he would almost certainly not have won election. If he had not followed through, he would probably not have won reelection. (Whether the bill he signed was the best that could have been achieved is another matter.) The Patriot Act, another of Cato's targets, also has majority support.

Bush could have pursued an alternative political strategy that increased his appeal to libertarian voters; but that increased appeal would have been, at the very least, compatible with losing reelection. Boaz and Kirby say that Republicans "should return to Reagan's fiscal conservatism and Goldwater's social tolerance." That's a misreading of history. Goldwater was never a majority-maker for Republicans, and at the time of his greatest influence he was a social conservative allied with other social conservatives. Reagan, for his part, was not nearly as eager to reform entitlements as the current president (and just as willing to create new ones when it seemed politically necessary).

Boaz and Kirby crack that "white people who go to church frequently do not a majority make." But that observation can lead to an attempt to recruit either secular whites, or blacks and Hispanics. Since blacks and Hispanics are more socially conservative and less libertarian than whites, however, an appeal to the mythical "libertarian center" is unlikely to sway them in large numbers.

Sager has gotten a lot of attention with his claim that Republicans are ceding the interior West to Democrats by alienating libertarians. It is true that Democrats have won governorships in recent years in Arizona, Montana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Wyoming, most of which had previously tended to be Republican. But to base a political strategy on this theory would be to replicate Boaz and Kirby's error. While losing strength in those places, Republicans have gained strength in other places with more people, such as the upper Midwest. Thus they gained electoral votes between 2000 and 2004. Besides, there's not much evidence that libertarianism is what is driving these Democratic victories. The Cato Institute has just released its biannual report card on the governors' fiscal policies. Here, in order, are the grades of those Democratic governors from the allegedly libertarian interior West: F, F, C, C, and D.

Democrats aren't behaving as though they believe that social conservatism is dooming the Republican party. In crucial races, they are trying to co-opt social conservatism. They are running pro-lifer Bob Casey Jr. for a Senate seat in Pennsylvania—one of

Social conservatives are blamed every time Republicans lose elections. When Republicans win big, by contrast, the air is thick with cries of an impending theocracy in America.

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their top pick-up opportunities. Harold Ford Jr., a Democratic candidate for the Senate from Tennessee who surprised a lot of observers by surging in the polls in September and October, has endorsed a constitutional amendment against same-sex marriage. In House races, Democrats such as Brad Ellsworth, Ken Lucas, and Heath Shuler are running to the right on social issues and drawing distinctions between themselves and their opponents on economics and the war.

None of this is to deny that social conservatives are capable of turning off the public. They did during the Terri Schiavo controversy. The approval ratings for Congress fell then, and they have not recovered since. But even that episode shows the latent strength of social conservatism. Howard Dean promised at the time that Democrats would remind the public in the 2006 and 2008 elections how terribly the Republicans had behaved. They haven't delivered on that promise. And no state has moved since the Schiavo affair to follow Oregon's lead by legalizing assisted suicide. The public reacted against what it saw as the politicization of a tragedy, and wanted the story off its screen as expeditiously as possible, which required Schiavo's death. Social conservatives may find that appalling, but it doesn't add up to a mandate for the Hemlock Society.

Dick Armey, the House majority leader during the Gingrich era, has recently started complaining about various religious conservatives. His complaints are colored by personal animosities, especially toward James Dobson of Focus on the Family. Some of them therefore have a somewhat thoughtless character. He criticizes his successors, for example, for holding votes on the marriage amendment when they knew it could not pass. How many times did Armey schedule votes on tax-limitation or balanced-budget amendments to the Constitution that he knew could not pass, either? Sometimes politicians try to build support for a cause by scheduling votes they know they will lose.

Armey makes a more interesting point, and echoes Sager, when he says that social conservatives have become more eager than they used to be to use governmental power to impose their values. Here is Sager making this point, in a passage George Will recently quoted in his column:

> Whereas conservative Christian parents once thought it was inappropriate for public schools to teach their kids about sex, now they want the schools to preach abstinence to children. Whereas conservative Christians used to be unhappy with evolution being taught in public schools, now they want Intelligent Design taught instead (or at least in addition). Whereas conservative Christians used to want the federal government to leave them alone, now they demand that more and more federal funds be directed to local churches and religious groups through Bush's faith-based initiatives program.

I said it was an interesting contention; I didn't say it was persuasive. It depends for its force almost entirely on cherry-picking. School prayer used to be a much higher priority for Christian conservatives and for Republicans than it is now. So did attempts to ban pornography. Social conservatives used to be much more eager to prohibit homosexual sex than they are now. Social conservatives may be upset that the Supreme Court struck down sodomy laws in 2003, but they are not campaigning to reinstate them (the way they are campaigning, for example, to bring back laws against abortion).

Yet Armey and Sager are on to something, all the same. Social conservatives haven't become more authoritarian. But it is probably true that the Republican party now includes more economically liberal social conservatives than it used to: that *Republican* social conservatives, that is, are better disposed to the welfare state than they used to be, because their ranks now include many formerly Democratic social conservatives. And it is also surely the case that their absorption into the Republican party helped to repel some libertarians. As a result, the Republicans have gotten more statist in some respects (although it is easy to exaggerate how much more).

Every attempted makeover of the conservative movement and Republican party over the last 15 years has been driven by the political weakness of anti-statism.

THE NEED TO LIMIT

Which brings us, finally, to the real crisis of conservatism, which is neither political nor philosophical but a mixture of both. That crisis can be boiled down to two propositions. The first is that, at least as the American electorate is presently constituted, there is no imaginable political coalition in America capable of sustaining a majority that takes a reduction of the scope of the federal government as one of its central tasks. The second is that modern American conservatism is incapable of organizing itself without taking that as a central mission.

The Republican party is a coalition that includes some libertarian-minded members, some social conservatives, and some voters who have a foot in both camps. It is easy to imagine (as Sager does) that it can choose which kind of majority party to be: one oriented toward the libertarians, or one oriented toward the social conservatives. If that were the case, a voter could root for one definition or the other, depending on his own priorities. But only one of those coalitions would actually form a majority. If over the last generation the Republicans had not absorbed the statist social conservatives at the price of losing some libertarians, it would have remained a minority party. If it had instead tried to pick up libertarian Democrats while alienating social conservatives, it would have become a much smaller minority than it already was.

Sager calls for a revival of "fusionism," the old vision, associated with Frank Meyer, one of NATIONAL REVIEW's founding

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spirits, of cooperation between social and economic conservatives. It is, within limits, an excellent idea. The two sides should emphasize points of common agreement and try hard to avoid gratuitous offense to each other. But the economic conservatives do not pull their electoral weight within the alliance, and will get the shorter end of the stick in any majority coalition. This will be true even if most social conservatives are themselves sympathetic to free markets and limited government. Limited government does not have enough passionate supporters to overcome the supporters that individual statist programs have when they are being debated.

That is why, after the collapse of the Gingrich-Armey frontal assault on big government, conservatives started turning toward other strategies. (The notion, incidentally, that their turn away from this frontal assault began with the presidential candidacy of George W. Bush is careless revisionism.) They thought that tax reduction, which is still very popular, might constrain the growth of government; that incremental progress toward free trade would have the same effect; that flexible labor markets would reduce the power of unions to lobby for statism; and, above all, that policies to encourage the growth of the new investor class would change the composition of the electorate. Those strategies have not proven entirely mistaken—the Left seems increasingly panicked about the impact of Bush's savings accounts on the politics of health care—but their results have been disappointing. And so it is not clear how opponents of statism can now move forward. Sager's apparent view that to acknowledge anti-statism's political limits is to commit treason to the cause is not likely to help.

But anti-statists can take heart, in a way, from the second horn of the dilemma. Conservatives don't seem to be able to move forward in any other way than theirs. Every attempted makeover of the conservative movement and Republican party over the last 15 years has been driven by the political weakness of anti-statism. Patrick Buchanan tried to throw out the free traders to bring in socially conservative union members. George W. Bush offered a "compassionate" (read: more statist) conservatism. John McCain and his fans had a "national-greatness conservatism." Conservatism has rejected each ideological novelty like a body rejecting a transplant.

Buchananism repelled more voters than it attracted to the Republican standard. Buchanan ended up purging himself rather than anyone else—before having to slink back to a party that had moved even farther from his vision. Conservatives may not know how to fight the overspending that "compassion" dictates, but they do know that they hate it. Bush's signature policies of "compassion"—the Medicare drug bill, the education bill, easy immigration, and the faith-based initiative—either failed from the start or have come into disrepute among conservatives. Some of that disrepute is excessive: Conservatives who think that congressional rejection of Bush's Medicare bill would have yielded a free-market alternative are indulging in fantasy. But the disrepute is a sign that modern conservatism cannot easily be dragged away from anti-statism, and may not be able to be dragged away at all.

In my book, that's a good thing. But it does make the future of conservatism that much harder to map. And it doesn't help when my fellow anti-statists spread fog over the debate about that future. **NR**

■ AT WAR II

No Substitute For Victory

As goes the Iraq War, so go many things

DAVID B. RIVKIN JR.

THROUGHOUT history, countries at war have puzzled and even agonized over how to allocate their scarce military resources. This concern has been particularly acute whenever a nation has confronted multiple enemies spread over a wide geographic expanse, all of whom it could not take on at once. Napoleon, for example, defeated several of the powerful coalitions arrayed against him by engaging their Austrian, Prussian, Russian, and British members in rapid succession. During World War II, President Roosevelt chose a "Europe first" strategy that poured American aid into Britain and Russia at a time when Japan was marching from one success to another in the Pacific theater.

Roosevelt did this even though it was Japan, not Germany, that had attacked the U.S. at Pearl Harbor, and despite strong opposition from the U.S. Navy, much of the American public, and many congressional Republicans reluctant to involve America in a European land war. Roosevelt's decision was driven by the conviction that German military prowess and the possibility of British collapse made the Nazis the most dangerous of the Axis Powers.

It is not surprising, then, that there is a debate now in the U.S. about the proper sequencing of military efforts in the War on Terror. What *is* surprising—and disturbing—is that, at least with regard to Iraq, the debate is more a slugfest than a serious discussion of the war's underlying strategic questions. The three most important such questions are the connection between the fighting in Iraq and the overarching struggle against Islamist forces worldwide, the impact of possible Iraq outcomes on that broader war, and the prospects for U.S. success in Iraq.

The critics, by and large, maintain that Iraq is not a part of the post–September 11 campaign against radical Islam. They believe that continuing to fight there would not advance the War on Terror, and would even weaken U.S. ability to prosecute it. Their rationale is that combat in Iraq both misdirects American economic and military resources better spent elsewhere and, per the oft-misquoted recent National Intelligence Estimate, serves as a recruiting poster for jihadists. They also claim that, even if Iraq were lost, the negative strategic consequences would not be serious. By contrast, supporters of our efforts in Iraq hold that the fighting there is an integral part of the war against Islamist terrorism; that, with patience and

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continued U.S. military investment, a reasonably stable, democratic, and pro-American government can emerge in Iraq; and that the consequences of defeat would be dire.

THE MEANING OF MESOPOTAMIA

How is one to disentangle these competing claims? When the three strategic questions are considered, the war supporters' answers to at least the first two—the connection between Iraq and the broader War on Terror, and the consequences of American defeat in Iraq—are correct.

To begin with, there is no doubt that, in the minds of our enemies, the fight in Iraq, far from being a strategic distraction, is very much part of fundamentalist Islam's engagement with the United States and its allies. While they wage this war worldwide, they view Mesopotamia as the pivotal theater. To them, expelling U.S. forces from these territories is a necessary prelude to the creation of a global caliphate. This is why the jihadists of the world are pouring into Iraq and dying there by the thousands.

In addition to seeking to inflict a military defeat on the U.S., al-Qaeda and Islamists of all stripes regularly rail against democracy as profoundly anti-Islamic, a mode of governance to be opposed at all costs. Notably, the thinking of both the late Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, a rabid Sunni extremist, and Iran's Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, a rabid Shiite extremist, is deeply hostile to democracy. This is not particularly surprising. The notions of separating the state from religion and letting democratic elections interfere with the divine will are profoundly inconsistent with fundamentalist Islam and its history.

Most critics of the Bush administration do not even acknowledge the Islamists' opposition to democracy; or, if they do, they dismiss it as irrelevant rhetoric. But their position is as foolish as that of the Sovietologists who urged Western policymakers during the Cold War to ignore Soviet doctrinal writings. As was the case with the Soviets, the Islamists' words and deeds match perfectly. Indeed, the fact that the insurgency in Iraq has been so fierce, and has drawn so much support from foreign jihadists, demonstrates the Islamists' conviction that Iraq has become the key strategic theater in the War on Terror, and that attempts to build democracy there must be defeated. The efforts of Iran and Syria—America's foremost enemies in the Middle East—to bring about a U.S. defeat in Iraq further underscore the war's importance.

Iraq matters to the Islamists in a way that, say, Algeria—where they lost a civil war—did not. They do not think it a calamity to be defeated by a secular authoritarian regime, particularly when the U.S. is not directly engaged. Islamist groups have denounced pro-American authoritarian regimes in the Middle East, but not for their democracy deficit. It is, rather, their alliance with the U.S. and their insufficiently Islamic orientation that are anathema to the extremists.

In fact, the extremists find that authoritarian regimes actually aid their strategy. To the extent that such regimes are oppressive and do not provide for the well-being of the populace, the Islamists can ride the wave of popular discontent and channel it to their advantage. Certain Islamist groups may face government repression, as has the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Syria, but secular authoritarianism does not offer a viable ideological challenge to Islamist teachings, especially since pan-Arab nationalism is an utterly spent force. Not surprisingly, secular Arab leaders don Islamist garb whenever it serves their ends. Saddam Hussein, for instance, adopted fundamentalist rhetoric and launched a massive mosque-building program after his defeat in the 1991 Gulf War.

Iraq matters a great deal in the broader War on Terror precisely because building democracy in the heart of the Islamic world enables us to pose an ideological challenge to our enemies—unlike ineffectual soft-sell efforts to convince Islamists of our basic goodness. Similarly mistaken efforts were made during the Cold War, when much of our propaganda was wasted portraying the U.S. as home to a sophisticated society with a vibrant cultural life, impressive athletic attainments, and no feelings of hostility toward Moscow. Students of the Cold War ranging from George Kennan to Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, while differing in many of their policy prescriptions, correctly maintained that the fight could be won only by combining realpolitik policies challenging Soviet power with a strong ideological attack on Communism. What ultimately captured the hearts and minds of the Soviet people was the demonstration that Communism was spiritually bankrupt, and that democracy was not.

People in the Middle East likewise do not live by bread alone. It is true that democracy will enhance their quality of life and mitigate their economic and social grievances—a fact oft trumpeted by the Bush administration. But these are not democracy's most important benefits. Far more essential is its ability to vitiate Islamism's spiritual vigor. Indeed, since radical Islam seems to be far better than Soviet Communism at tugging the heartstrings of the dispossessed and even motivating them to commit brutalities, it is even more important now than it was during the Cold War to undermine the enemy's ideological legitimacy.

The Islamist ideology is animated by the idea that sharia-based governance is both inevitable and the only alternative to the Middle East's existing corrupt and authoritarian regimes. Just as the Soviets understood that the demonstration of one Communist regime's illegitimacy would be a demonstration of all Communist regimes' illegitimacy—the real reason for the enunciation of the Brezhnev Doctrine—al-Qaeda and other Islamists readily grasp that the success of democracy in Iraq would have catastrophic consequences for their legitimacy. Indeed, because Iraq's much-maligned constitution fuses Islam and democracy—unlike, say, the secular Turkish constitution—it poses a uniquely powerful challenge to the jihadist ideology. U.S. critics of the Iraqi government focus solely on its shortcomings and fail to realize that the jihadists view its mere survival—no matter how weak it is, or how plagued by internal fighting, or how tenuous its ability to provide security—as a grave threat. The jihadists know that the establishment of a democratic polity that empowers women and calls for all of Iraq's communities to enjoy political and economic rights would be a fundamental blow to their cause. This is the main reason Islamic extremists of all stripes have unleashed horrific violence on Iraq.

What about the argument that U.S. involvement in Iraq was a strategic mistake because it empowered the Shiites? Allegedly, this has helped create a radical Iran-dominated Shiite crescent running from Tehran to Baghdad to Beirut, bolstering the influence of the Islamists in the Middle East. Yet this outcome is neither inevitable nor even likely. Despite common religious affinities, the Shiites are far from united. The two key Iraqi Shiite groups—the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq and Moqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi Army, which are allied with different factions of the Iranian regime—are divided on the policy issues, including whether to establish a strong Shiite region in southern Iraq and whether to

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expel the U.S. Indeed, the recent outbreak of fighting among Shiites in southern Iraq highlights the extent of their disunity.

Their divisions in turn dampen the enthusiasm of many Shiite leaders for an all-out confrontation with the numerically weaker but more unified Sunnis. Hence they have a keen interest in the continuation of America's military and political presence in Iraq. Meanwhile, a large portion of the Sunni community is concerned that, notwithstanding all the divisions among the Shiites, it will suffer grievously if the fighting escalates.

Critics have portrayed the intra-Shiite discord and the Shiite–Sunni hostility as insurmountable obstacles to U.S. objectives in Iraq, but they are also strategic opportunities. The U.S. should be able to navigate successfully the shoals of Sunni–Shiite strife and intra-Shiite discord just as we played the Sino–Soviet split to our advantage during the Cold War, and the fighting between the Pashtun-based Taliban and the Tajik-led Northern Alliance during the Afghan War. Over the long term, as Vali Nasr of the Naval Postgraduate School argues in a recent issue of *Foreign Affairs*, the U.S. may be able to build a lasting and positive relationship with the Shiite communities in the Middle East. It may even be possible to use American-allied Shiites in Iraq as leverage against the Shiites in Iran.

An America that cannot stand the heat in Iraq will be seen as an America that cannot be a credible player elsewhere in the Middle East.

To be sure, this kind of bold strategy requires staying power and is incompatible with any of the deadline-driven disengagement plans favored by most of the Democrats. The critics who claim that the Western presence in Iraq inflames the insurgency lose sight of the war's ultimate objectives. Engaging the enemy always creates more hatred and fosters more resistance—right up until the enemy is defeated.

THE SPECTER OF DEFEAT

Given these stakes, even partially successful democracy promotion in the Islamic world and the creation of a modestly pro-American and strongly anti-jihadist government in the heart of the Middle East would be a stunning strategic defeat for al-Qaeda and its allies. It would be a brilliant geopolitical stroke, fusing American idealism with the imperatives of realpolitik. Conversely, the consequences of a U.S. loss in Iraq would be manifold and dire. Most obviously, the fates of Baghdad and Kabul are inextricably intertwined. This is because the Taliban and Qaeda elements in Afghanistan would surely be emboldened by a U.S. defeat in Iraq, while the pro-Karzai forces would be demoralized. A defeat in Iraq would also make it difficult to retain support, both in the U.S. and internationally, for Western efforts in Afghanistan.

More fundamentally, those who claim that the current Hobbesian chaos in Iraq can be neatly separated from other Middle East trouble spots, and that it does not affect America's influence in the region, are utterly wrong. The war of all against all, with nationalism and Islamic extremism thrown in as the major motivating forces, is not limited to Iraq; it occurs frequently throughout the region, appearing in places where American troops have never set foot.

For example, while the Gaza Strip has not seen a level of suicide bombings comparable to Baghdad's, it is rapidly descending into an Iraq-style conflict. Hamas backers of Prime Minister Haniyeh and Fatah backers of President Abbas are battling daily; assassinations of members of these and other Palestinian factions are rampant; and feuds have emerged within both Hamas and Fatah. Regional powers have also become involved, with Iran and Syria backing Hamas and Egypt supporting Fatah. Meanwhile, a new Lebanese civil war—with fighting among the country's Christian, Shiite, and Sunni communities—is a distinct possibility, and religious discord may also emerge in such countries as Jordan and Syria. In this environment, an America that cannot stand the heat in Iraq will be seen as an America that cannot be a credible player elsewhere in the Middle East.

We also know that Islamist forces have perceived a long series of American retreats—in places ranging from Vietnam to Beirut to Mogadishu—as a sign that, in bin Laden's charming words, the U.S. is a "weak horse." His sentiment is not uncommon; Islamists are constantly searching for evidence of their foes' weakness. This is apparent in Hezbollah's intensified militancy following Israel's 2000 pullout from Lebanon; in Shiite claims that Britain's recent withdrawal from Amarah and its adoption of "kinder and gentler" rules of engagement in Basra amount to the beginning of British withdrawal from Iraq, and should be exploited; and in the Taliban's launching of an offensive in Afghanistan when NATO—thought not to have the stomach for a serious fight—assumed greater responsibility there. Perhaps the most telling example of how perceived weakness plays out in the Middle East is the decision of a number of "moderate" Arab intellectuals, in the aftermath of the Israeli military's failure to defeat Hezbollah during the recent fighting in Lebanon, to recant their endorsements of a long-term peace with Israel.

The U.S. retreated from Vietnam after being engaged there politically and militarily for nearly a decade and suffering almost 60,000 war deaths and 150,000 casualties. It paid a huge geopolitical price in the form of emboldened Soviet foreign policy in the 1970s and '80s and a precipitous decline in U.S. credibility worldwide. It would have incurred an even greater cost if not for the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s. Today, our foes would see U.S. inability to prevail against a determined Islamist insurgency, especially after battling it for a few years and sustaining casualties that are but a small fraction of those we incurred in Vietnam, as definitive evidence of the failure of American will. If the U.S. cannot sustain its war in Iraq, they will reason, it is unlikely to be patient and resilient when confronting future enemies. This conclusion would, to an extent unseen since the years immediately following Vietnam, dramatically diminish the willingness of any government in the Middle East to cooperate with America.

Developments in Iraq are being avidly watched around the

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world, from Tehran to Moscow to Beijing to Pyongyang to Caracas. Given the adaptive nature of warfare, all of our enemies, whether Islamist or not, are certain to use insurgency tactics in any future military confrontation with the U.S., opting for suicide bombings and other means of attacking civilians, possibly in great numbers. Not surprisingly, these tactics have already migrated to Afghanistan. Meanwhile, if America expects difficult and politically unsustainable counterinsurgency campaigns to be a component of future conflicts, its willingness to use force—no matter how great the provocation—will be greatly diminished, and the deterrence value of American military power (including the U.S. nuclear arsenal) accordingly degraded.

This dethroning of American military power would embolden all rogue regimes and terrorist groups. But it would particularly embolden our Islamist foes. Their religious fanaticism would lead them to ascribe an apocalyptic significance to American retreat from Iraq, just as they did to the Soviet defeat in Afghanistan. A U.S. loss in Iraq would be taken as a sign that the time had come to launch ever bolder attacks on American soil and against American interests overseas, and to push for the creation of a global caliphate. Thus, an America that fails to stop suicide bombings on the streets of Baghdad, Fallujah, and Ramadi is likely to face them on the streets of New York, Washington, and Los Angeles.

The bottom line is that, with our ability to project power against the Islamist forces dramatically diminished, we would have to fight a largely reactive war, focusing mainly on homeland defense against an emboldened enemy. History's lessons concerning such warfare are not encouraging. To take but one example, the Roman Empire in the 4th century ceased strategic offensive operations and, ultimately, was overwhelmed by the barbarians.

IS IT WINNABLE?

These stark realities have become so evident that, in the last several weeks, even some Democratic critics of the war have begun to concede that U.S. withdrawal from Iraq, no matter how it is dressed up, would be an unmitigated strategic catastrophe. And yet—with astonishing cynicism—they have continued to blast the administration for remaining committed to victory, while claiming that retreat is both inevitable and must be handled as a bipartisan endeavor.

There are, of course, those who claim that the violence in Iraq, and particularly the U.S. failure to stabilize Baghdad over the last several weeks, demonstrates that military victory is impossible. A recent *New York Times* editorial made this point with characteristic understatement: "No matter what President Bush says, the question is not whether America can win in Iraq. The only question is whether the United States can extricate itself [without calamitous results]." Yet the notion that the American people, who continued to fight at Valley Forge, Shiloh, Iwo Jima, and Normandy, who persevered and won numerous wars against difficult odds, cannot prevail against the forces of chaos and jihad in Iraq is absurd on its face.

Given the dire consequences of defeat, U.S. policy must be to do everything possible to prevail. Unless the critics acknowledge this strategic reality, their recommendations concerning the military, political, and diplomatic aspects of U.S. Iraq policy cannot be taken seriously. This does not mean that new military, political, and diplomatic solutions should not be tried. In fact, contrary to the claims of critics who would have us believe that the U.S. has been lurching from one mistake to another, American military operations in Iraq have been remarkably flexible, promptly absorbing lessons learned and constantly innovating.

There are no easy shortcuts to victory. Counterinsurgency campaigns are won by staying in the fight and grinding down the insurgents. Defeating the insurgencies in Malaysia and Algeria took years of hard fighting, with high civilian and military casualties. Convening new diplomatic conferences with Iraq's neighbors, "redeploying" U.S. forces out of Iraq, withdrawing them from combat in major cities, sternly telling the Iraqi government to crack down on Shiite militias, and many other "cures" advanced by critics are in fact placebos. Some of them are positively harmful, such as the notion that we should abandon our pro-democracy efforts and help establish a "strong" government in Baghdad to restore stability. This approach would in fact not make it any easier to provide security, and would vitiate the strategic benefits of building democracy in Iraq. In any case, all of these "solutions" are meant primarily to obfuscate the basic reality of the conflict: We and our Iraqi allies are either going to win by bringing down the level of violence to acceptable levels, with positive political consequences to follow; or we are going to lose. Everything else is window dressing.

While further innovations and greater flexibility are needed, the administration's major—and heretofore unfulfilled—task is to convince the American people that the consequences of defeat in Iraq would be disastrous. In a very real sense, the fate of Iraq is determined more in the streets of Washington than in the streets of Baghdad. Americans need to be told again and again that, despite the costs and sacrifices, continuing the fight until a reasonably stable and democratic government holds sway in Iraq is the only way to win the War on Terror. The worst message to send is that victory is impossible and we must now choose between the disastrous and semi-disastrous scenarios attendant upon defeat.

Critics who claim that the Iraq War is not of pivotal importance to our existential fight with fundamentalist Islam are dead wrong. While some of them, such as George Soros and Ted Turner, at least honestly acknowledge their mistaken belief that the struggle against radical Islam is not a war at all, the rest deploy warlike rhetoric without understanding what the war is about. To say, as John Kerry has, that we are really only at war with the group that last attacked us on American soil (al-Qaeda), or to obsess over the fact that Saddam Hussein did not help plan September 11, is to denude the war of its strategic meaning.

Adolf Hitler had nothing to do with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Japan and Germany were not even coordinating their war strategies against a common enemy, the Soviet Union. Indeed, Japan rather foolishly chose not to engage Russia in the winter of 1941 when the Germans were pressing it hard to do so, and this allowed Stalin to pull Soviet forces from the Far East and rush them to the gates of Moscow. Our World War II foes were animated by different and even inconsistent ideologies. Yet no serious military historian would question that combat with Nazi Germany in the European and African theaters was a part of a broader epochal struggle against the Axis Powers. Likewise, the streets of Baghdad, the dusty roads of the Sunni Triangle, the back alleys of Kabul, and the mountains of Peshawar are all theaters in the global struggle against the Islamists. The surest way to hand them victory is to lose sight of this reality. **NR**

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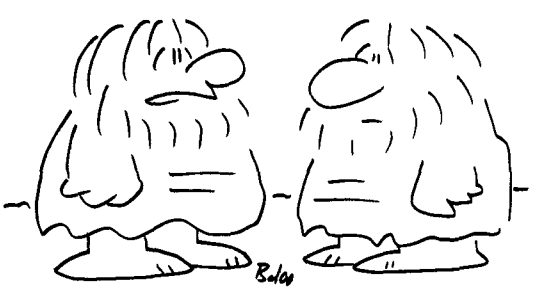
HELP!!!!

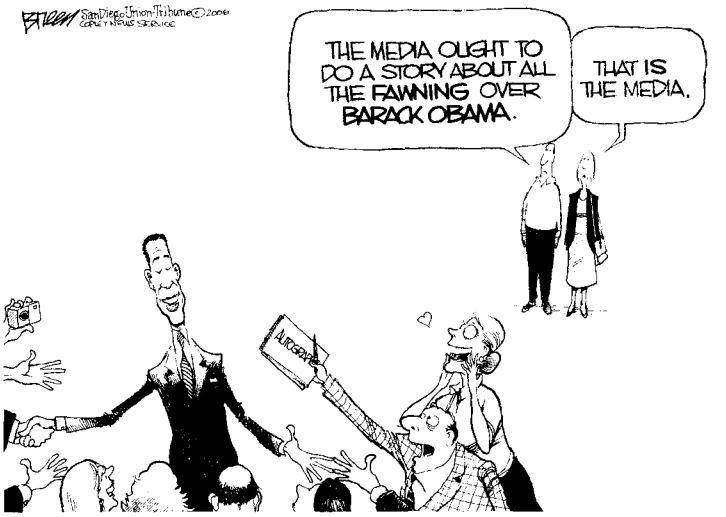
Some Surprise

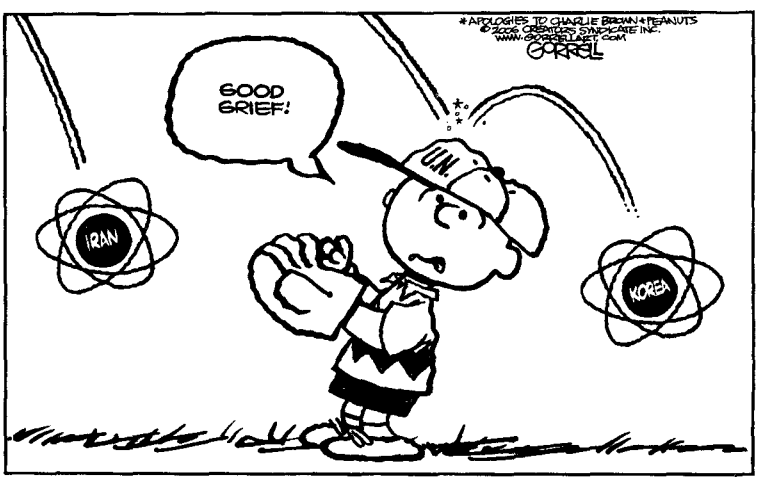
Harold Ickes, in the shade
Like Frankenstein's gimping aide,
Plotted an October ploy;
But (1), moneybags were coy,
And (2), so unstrung, the pot
Got, like, peanuts from that lot.
Add a black vote that's depressed
And you'll see why Harold's stressed.

—W. H. von Dreele



"Rocks, sticks, fire . . . Let's face it—we're running out of ideas."





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the long view

ROB LONG

From the Congressional Inbox

To: MadamSpeaker@HouseofReps.gov
From: AhmadMan@iranonline.ir
Subject: Congrats!!!!

Dear Madam Speaker:

Hey!!! Congrats on the midterm thang!! Great to know that there's a sane voice back in the U.S., LOL!! Would love to get together soon to discuss how things got so bad between our two countries over the years (bet ya we're thinking the same thing!) and what we can do to repair stuff. I'm assuming Pelosi isn't a Jewish name, right? It sounds Italian but I'm bad that way. Anyhoo . . . give me a shout back and let's get the dialogue going!!

I keep thinking a great thing might be for you to come and visit Iran yourself, and see what a wonderful, friendly country we are. See it for yourself. Through a gauzy veil, obviously. And without addressing any male directly. But it would be my pleasure to show your husband all around our wonderful, peace-loving country while you sit silently in another vehicle.

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad

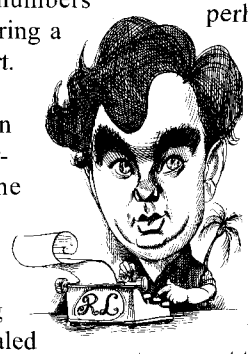
PS: Would love to get clarity on the Jew-name thing, when you get a chance! :)

To: MadamSpeaker@HouseofReps.gov
From: LilKim@JucheIdeaOnline.dprk
Subject: "Kim Jong Il and Madeleine Albright Have Sent You an Evite"

Nancy Pelosi:

Kim Jong Il and Madeleine Albright have sent you an Evite! Please come to a casual potluck event celebrating the historic victory of the Democratic Party in the United States at the Hall of the Juche Idea, Pyongyang, Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The event will be televised live on Korean television, and simulcast on Keith Olbermann's show on MSNBC. It will be an opportunity for the new leaders of the United States Congress to meet, greet, and get to know the Dear Leader Kim Jong Il in a new context, without being overshadowed by the neocon warmongering corporate criminal enterprise Bush Administration, and without the stuffy, overbearing atmosphere of a formal diplomatic banquet, what with its many courses and so much food just going to waste, and the huge expense, which, let's be honest, both of our countries would be better off spending on nuclear fuel!

So it's going to be a small gathering—we're trying to keep the numbers down under 100. Please bring a covered hot dish and a dessert. And a cold dish. And a salad. And some Powerbars in various flavors. And an alternative hot dish. And some canned fruit and vegetables. And some uncooked grain in sealed sacks. Tinned meat and fish. Anything preserved. Frozen, vacu-sealed meat items. Cooking oil. Heavy wool socks. Laundry soap.



Can't wait to meet you in person! Let's make 2006 the first year in a new, friendly relationship between our countries!

Madeleine Albright and Kim Jong Il

To: MadamSpeaker@HouseofReps.gov
From: JefeHugo@gobiernovenezuela.vz
Subject: I can no smell the sulfur no more!

My wonderful Speaker:

I can no smell the sulfur no more! I can only smell what it is that you smell like, which is the roses and the lilies and the smell of the roasting pork! How delicious you smell! Like a feast! I would like to eat you very soon!

How can we soon see each other and smell each other like we smell and enjoy the smell which is not the sulfur smell of the devil. You know who I mean! I know this that you know what I mean!

This is wonderful that you are now the leader of that country and that the devil is being cast out so soon! I will send you barrels of oil! I will send you some pictures of me with this email that are NOT SAFE FOR WORK.

From here in Venezuela I send you the very fine congratulations of winning the new government and I hope that you find time to shoot the people who did not want you to win. But I must tell you some advice and that is to shoot them in such a way that it looks like perhaps they shot themselves in sadness or maybe in a kind of sexy triangle. Because otherwise there are people who say that the people who got shot maybe didn't get shot on the accident and then you have to shoot those people as well and it becomes a lot of shooting and not so much getting all the things done that you want to do.

I am also wondering if perhaps you like what you see of me. I am wondering if there is not something between us, you American politician and me Venezuelan jefe grande? I think perhaps there is. I think perhaps we are already finding this out, and that you are sitting in your office reading my words and maybe looking at the picture of me next to my car and me lying on the rock with no clothes and you are thinking that this little jefe is a special man. I feel that too. Do you feel that?

Do you? I wait for your answer, Speaker of the wonderful smell . . .

Hugo

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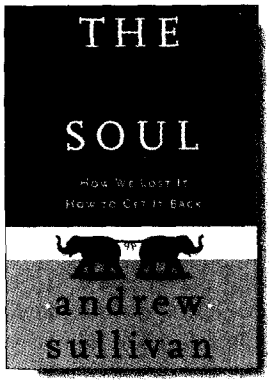
Sulky Sullivan



The Conservative Soul: How We Lost It, How to Get It Back, by Andrew Sullivan (HarperCollins, 304 pp., $25.95)

JONAH GOLDBERG

I'm asked few questions more than "What happened to Andrew Sullivan?"

Why did one of the clearest conservative voices after 9/11 go so far off his feed? In 2001, Sullivan spoke passionately against the fetid moral equivalence that saw no difference between Islamism and an America rightfully aroused to defend itself. President Bush was once the right man at the right time. Today, he's the idiot-savant godhead to a fanatical cult of "Christianists"—indistinguishable from Islamists in the ways that matter—who may have already established a "thinly veiled military dictatorship" in the United States. Once a voice of restraint and reason, Sullivan now specializes in shrill panic: mercurial ranting full of operatic arguments, steeped in bad faith, aimed at people he once praised (including yours truly). Agreement with Sullivan bespeaks courageous enlightenment, disagreement advertises that you are a knave or ideological lickspittle.

There are many theories about what "happened" to Sullivan. They vary wildly in charity. But it's fair to say that for many conservatives, Sullivan has become the intellectual equivalent of a write-off. He has not quite reached Kevin Phillips or John Dean territory—where only the *New York Times* takes it on faith that he is a conservative—but for many conservatives the chaff long ago swamped the wheat. Which is why most conservatives won't buy, or read, his book; it will instead be read and lionized by liberals eager to paint Sullivan as a maverick-martyr to a "real" conservatism that has never existed, and could never exist, in the U.S.

To a certain extent, this is a shame, because the book has merits: It's often elegantly written, and contains moments of impressive lucidity. Many conservatives—particularly younger ones with a shallow appreciation of the important distinctions between conservatism and Republican politics—could benefit from reading the best parts. Self-described members of the Christian Right could also stand to take a swig or two from Sullivan's tonic. Though there should be a warning label: Don't gulp too much, because beyond small doses *The Conservative Soul* transmogrifies from tonic to snake oil.

According to Sullivan, the benighted American Right has misplaced the epistemological savoir-faire that comes with skepticism. We've lost the sense that we are fallible, that God's will is never truly known. Conservatism has become shot through with a theological and political absolutism he calls fundamentalism, theoconservatism, and sometimes "Christianism." To demonstrate this, he unleashes the usual parade of horribles one can find in dozens of left-wing polemics: Pat Robertson, James Dobson, et al. He pastes these bits and pieces of flesh upon a grand effigy, a towering straw man he calls American conservatism.

The Conservative Soul is something of an homage to Sullivan's second favorite thinker, political philosopher Michael Oakeshott (his favorite: Andrew Sullivan). Oakeshott was a brilliant advocate for a small-c conservatism of temperament, one that placed trust in institutions, trial-and-error, and muddling-through without ironclad dogma. This was hardly a unique contribution. Burke, Hayek, and Kirk all made similar or related arguments—indeed, Kirk liked to quote H. Stuart Hughes's aphorism that "conservatism is the negation of ideology." But Sullivan loves Oakeshott's emphasis that we cannot rely on books and theories to guide us. One cannot walk upright as a human being while constantly looking down to read a book, goes the Oakeshottian line.

One of the things that lent panache to Sullivan's writings is that he has something of an outsider's perspective (cultivated to a high sheen). A gay, Catholic, British expat who was the in-house conservative at *The New Republic*, Sullivan often has a certain visitor-from-Mars credibility. Because he sees things from outside, his approach can be the source of fresh and interesting observations. But it can also be the source of much silliness. A visiting Martian might spot some underappreciated social dynamics; he also might think humans are slaves to dogs because we pick up their scat.

Sullivan sees religiously motivated political activists running around Washington and a president—"the most powerful Christian fundamentalist in the world"—fighting a war against a demonized enemy and thinks that because he has never seen such a thing before it must be unprecedented. "Until recently," Sullivan writes, "American evangelicalism tended to keep some distance from government power." Many on the left work from a similar assumption. All of them would be well served by studying the "Christianist" roots of American Progressivism, which make President Bush's compassionate conservatism seem like the weekend hobby of a lapsed Unitarian. Woodrow Wilson proclaimed that every public servant must make Jesus his model, telling one youth group, "There is a mighty task before us and it welds us together. It is to make the United States a mighty Christian Nation, and to Christianize the world."

What makes this history especially ironic is that Sullivan's own project is basically Progressive. To understand why this is so, we must examine his argument in detail. Sullivan holds that "fundamentalism"—a term that includes the pope, most Republicans, the Taliban, and tens of millions of ordinary Americans—is sinful, inorganic, and an illness of the mind. In this, Sullivan sounds very much like self-parodying liberal Anthony Lewis, who has explained that the primary lesson of his career is that "certainty is the enemy of decency and humanity in people who are sure they are right, like Osama bin Laden

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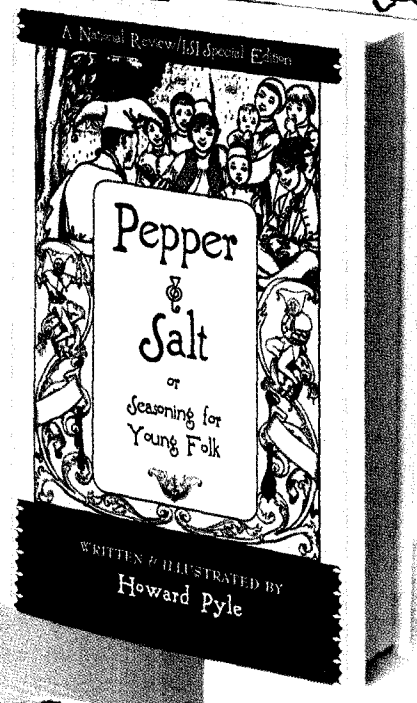
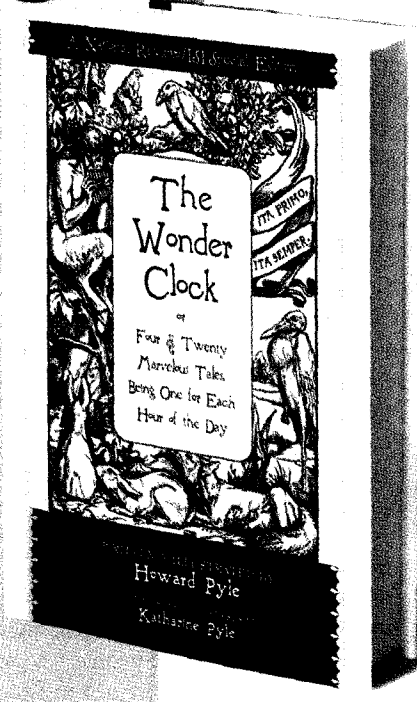
NR's New Classic Children's Book

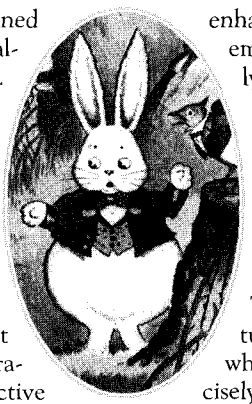
Three wonderful new books—each beautiful, lavishly illustrated, and brimming with enchanting tales—that are *musts* for your personal family library!





National Review and the Intercollegiate Studies Institute are proud to announce the publication of three wonderful new books—lavishly illustrated collections of wholesome and trustworthy tales that will delight anyone aged 8 to 80!—that are *musts* for every family's library, and wonderful gifts for deserving sons, daughters, grandchildren, nieces, and nephews.

Two of these precious books—*The Wonder Clock* and *Pepper & Salt*—are the work of the great Howard Pyle (1853–1911). Regarded as one of America's great illustrators and founder of the influential "Brandywine School," Pyle first gained renown for his self-illustrated serialized children's stories published in *St. Nicholas Magazine* and other major publications.



But he became hugely popular in 1887 when, in conjunction with his sister Katharine, he wrote and illustrated *The Wonder Clock*. Now nearly six-score years later, this groundbreaking collection is still considered to be one of the best works of American children's literature. Its 24 entertaining and instructive tales (including the famous "King Stork")—one for each hour of the day—overflow with fascinating characters, and are indescribably enhanced by Howard Pyle's powerful illustrations.

Any child will find this book a good friend. "I put on my dream-cap one day and stepped into Wonderland," Pyle writes in the Preface to *The Wonder Clock*. It is the first of many exciting steps he takes in this collection, and your child or grandchild will find it a true joy to be Pyle's companion on this most delightful of literary journeys!

The Wonder Clock is part of a convenient boxed set, joined by another of Pyle's famous works, *Pepper & Salt*. From within the cover of this unique book come the delicious and powerful fragrances of an entire spice shop. It is fair to say that this visually extravagant tome was not so much written by Howard Pyle, nor so much illustrated by him, as it was designed by him. It is a work of art.

Pepper & Salt is so special and so distinct that it will immediately capture the attention and the imagination of all, from children to adults. Two dozen beautiful and enchanting full-page fable-poems—mischievous, humorous, and instructive lessons adorned by Pyle's delightful line art and enhanced by his unique lettering—embrace *Pepper & Salt*'s eight finely told and lavishly illustrated tales.

They wowed American youth when first published 120 years ago, and, as all works of great literature do, *The Wonder Clock* and *Pepper & Salt* have withstood the test of time. They remain excellent literature, as fresh and engaging as when first published. They are precisely the books today's children sorely need to read.

The handsome boxed-set collection of these two Pyle classics is $45.00. We've only produced 1,000 sets, so you are encouraged to act promptly to order yours while our supply lasts. As our "thank you" for taking advantage of this offer, we'll also send you a free copy of *Wizard of Oz* author L. Frank Baum's beloved (and profusely illustrated) tale, *Queen Zixi of Ix*. Shipping and handling is free, and *National Review* will be only too happy to accommodate you in sending these books as gifts (accompanied by an announcement card with your personal greeting), all at no extra charge.

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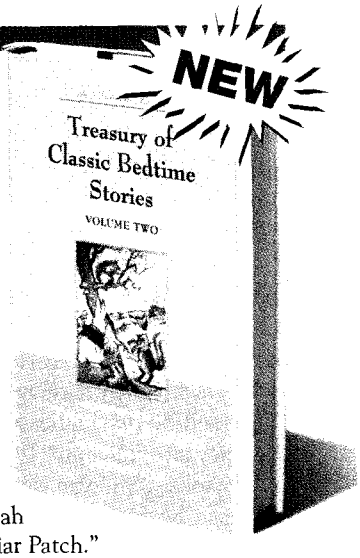
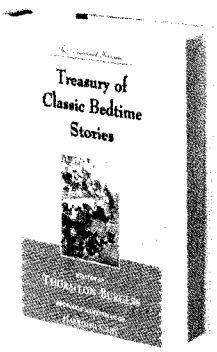
Are a Wholesome Must for Every Family!



We're equally proud to announce another new (and long-awaited) book—*The National Review Treasury of Classic Bedtime Stories, Volume Two.* Reprising the enchanting "Bedtime Story" books written by the great Thornton W. Burgess, this handsome hardcover collection features an array of woodland creatures—some saintly, some personable, others cranky and haughty, some even naughty, but all fun (and never dull!)—in simple, well-written stories that always entertain *and* teach a worthy lesson about human nature.

You will love it. And so (more so!) will those youngsters whom you give it to, whether for a birthday or Christmas gift. Inside this handsome hardcover's 346 pages—brightened by 60 of Harrison Cady's enchanting drawings (reproduced just as they appeared in the original old books!)—are ten terrific "adventure" tales of Buster Bear, Old Mr. Toad, Prickly Porky, Old Man Coyote, Paddy the Beaver, Mrs. Quack, Bobby Coon, Jimmy Skunk, Bob White, Ol' Mistah Buzzard, and the other colorful and loveable denizens of the "Green Meadows" and the "Briar Patch."

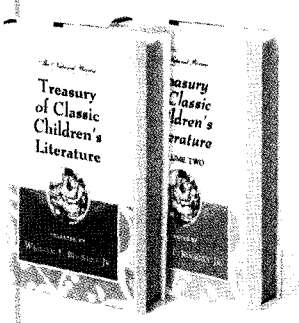


GET THE 'ORIGINAL' EDITION AND SAVE $10!

Burgess's tales entertained millions of Americans over two generations, and they remain exactly the kind of little dramas you will want to read to your wee ones or grandchildren as a prelude to sweet dreams. And developing readers will take to the book on their own like, well . . . like Buster Bear takes to honey! *The National Review Treasury of Classic Bedtime Stories* is refreshingly old-fashioned: Its tales are wholesome, fun, and instructive. This is one book that you will really want to share with a deserving child. Give a book that will be prized forever: The hardcover edition of *The National Review Treasury of Classic Bedtime Stories, Volume Two* is only $29.95!

And if you want both "Bedtime" books (the original volume has received much critical acclaim), they're yours for only $49.90—that's a $10 savings. Remember: postage and shipping are FREE, and we'll gladly ship gift copies (including with your books a handsome gift-announcement card—with a personal message should you so desire!).

THEY'RE BACK! NOW GET BOTH *NR*'S ACCLAIMED "CLASSIC CHILDREN'S LITERATURE" TREASURIES COLLECTIONS AND SAVE $10!



We've gone back to press and are now able to offer the set of "Classic Children's Literature" Treasuries (Original and "Volume Two" editions). These critically acclaimed collections are *musts* for every home, and are *perfect* gifts for young readers. Each big (over 500 pages!), lavishly illustrated hardcover contains over three dozen fabulous stories—personally selected by William F. Buckley Jr.!—by premier writers including Mark Twain, Rudyard Kipling, Lewis Carroll, L. Frank Baum, Louisa May Alcott, Jack London, Frances Hodgson Burnett, and many more *gifted* authors whose priceless literary gems are now polished, gleaming, and yours to thoroughly enjoy!

The critics have raved about these wonderful books. *Catholic Parent* magazine says these "excellent, wholesome" collections are filled with "wonderful children's stories that will delight, entertain and nourish your youngsters and teenagers." And the *Wall Street Journal* says they'll "excite in children an appreciation for the human condition." Every tale—whether about knights and princesses, giants or dwarfs, beggars and angels, whether tales of daring and silliness, or even saintliness, with brave girls defending their country and intrepid boys risking their lives to rescue others—is *wholesome*, entertaining, instructive, and inspirational. Each sells for $29.95, but they're available to you as a set for $49.90 (that includes free shipping and handling!).

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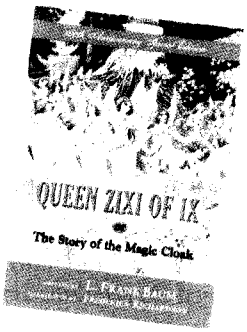

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and John Ashcroft." Of this principle, both Sullivan and Lewis are as certain as any "Christianist" is about the Resurrection.

The fact that evil is rarely defeated by people who are unsure they are right is lost on Sullivan. FDR was certain we needed to defeat Hitler; the civil-rights movement, too, was driven by religious certainty. Were FDR and Martin Luther King enemies of decency and humanity? Please.

Obviously, Sullivan would object to this because he believes nothing if not the moral superiority of his own position. But how to determine moral superiority? To answer this question, Sullivan takes us through feats of rhetorical prestidigitation—with his magician's assistants Oakeshott and Montaigne. At the end of the magic show we are left with the assertion that conscience, rooted in every manner of skepticism, is our only guide. Fundamentalist "diktats" from the pope or *The 700 Club* are ultimately forms of spiritual oppression. The individual can either be guided by conscience or slavishly submit to fundamentalist overlords. If the former, you are like Sullivan himself, a decent person bravely struggling to reconcile the world with your beliefs. If the latter, you've outsourced your humanity to a bunch of priests and preachers.

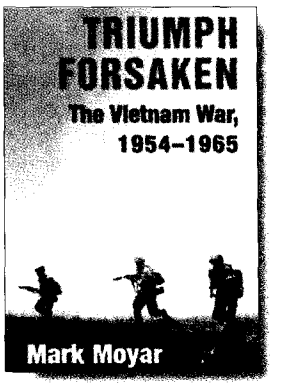
There are many rooms in this mansion of nonsense. Sullivan, for example, dismisses the possibility that "fundamentalists" actually *do* grapple with their consciences—because such a concession would explode the entire book. So, the question "What Would Jesus Do?" is one that is never seriously asked by anyone Sullivan calls a fundamentalist. Judging from the "fundamentalists" I know, this smacks of pure bigotry. Also, Sullivan would have us believe in an either/or choice: conscience or fundamentalist servitude. This is a false choice, one not found in American conservatism. Conscience is important, but conscience must be informed—not dictated to—by institutions, religion, tradition, and, of course, reason.

Which brings us to Progressivism. The Progressive ideology was born of Pragmatism—the idea that truths are subjective, and measured by their utility. Pragmatism, explained Horace Kallen in a proclamation Sullivan could have written, "dissolves dogmas into beliefs, eternities and necessities into change and chance, conclusions and finalities into processes. But men have invented philosophy precisely because they find change, chance and process too much for them, and desire infallible security and certainty." But, for these early liberals, Pragmatism was a one-way street: a tool for destroying the dogma of the enemy, while enshrining their own unimpeachable authority. Certainty wasn't the real enemy. The forces of certainty standing in progress's path were.

Oakeshott stood against this sort of corrosive rationalism, famously denouncing "the pursuit of perfection as the crow flies." Sullivan turns Oakeshott's reverence for tradition and custom on its head: He enthrones the all-justifying righteousness of conscience, in particular his own, in a moral pragmatism that says that orthodoxies have no binding authority. Pragmatism was built on the arrogance of intellectuals who believed they were smarter than anyone who lived before; Sullivan's divinization of conscience performs a similar task, with similar vanity. He dedicates page after page to illuminating the grandest mysteries of existence with the only lantern Sullivan trusts: his own conscience. Without this, we would all be lost. Indeed, he seems to believe that his own intense internal struggles (Sullivan always wins these fights, by the way) are mirrored in the struggles of the Republican party—indeed, the nation itself. The cover of the book depicts two elephants tied at the tail, presumably fighting for the soul of conservatism. This is, among other things, evidence of an enormous category error in which Sullivan endeavors to make the conservative temperament the foundation of a political program.

And it is here that the mansion of nonsense most obviously implodes. The notion that certainty is at odds with a just constitutional order, decency, and All Good Things founders on Sullivan's own hypocrisy. Not only is it a Monty Pythonesque absurdity to imagine a serious political movement founded on such bumper-sticker slogans as "We're not sure!" and "Hey, hey, ho, ho, certainty has got to go!" Sullivan himself proves that a politics based solely on one's own glorious conscience is just as capable of the sort of rigid, moralistic, self-righteous preening and us-versus-them logic that Sullivan's conservatism of doubt claims to stand against. **NR**

Before Quag Met Mire



Triumph Forsaken: The Vietnam War, 1954–1965, by Mark Moyar (Cambridge, 542 pp., $32)

JAMES S. ROBBINS

COMPARING the Iraq War to Vietnam is a staple of Bush-administration critics. The purpose of the analogy is to arouse a sense of defeat by degrees. This is possible because of the dominant analytical paradigm about Vietnam, which casts the conflict as an unjust war undertaken for questionable if not fraudulent reasons, poorly and immorally executed. It was a lost cause that never should have been found to begin with.

Mark Moyar, in his new book *Triumph Forsaken*, refers to this interpretation of Vietnam as the "orthodox" school of thought. So entrenched is this orthodox interpretation that its proponents consider axiomatic their premise that U.S. involvement in Vietnam was at best a lapse in judgment, at worst a criminal enterprise, and in any case a tragic mistake. The "revisionist" school, a growing insurgency in military history that Moyar explicitly represents, sees Vietnam as "a worthy but improperly executed enterprise."

Moyar's focus is on the formative years of the conflict, before the major

Mr. Robbins is the author of *Last in Their Class: Custer, Pickett, and the Goats of West Point.*

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> Back in the Cold War, whenever I had to review an unreadable book, I always comforted myself with the thought, 'Maybe the Russians will drop the Bomb and I won't have to finish reading this.' Those were the days. This time, stuck with *A Pilgrim's Way: The Personal Story of the Episcopal Bishop Charged with Heresy for Ordaining a Gay Man Who Was in a Committed Relationship*, by the Rt. Rev. Walter C. Righter, author of the longest subtitle in publishing history, all I could hope for was an asteroid.

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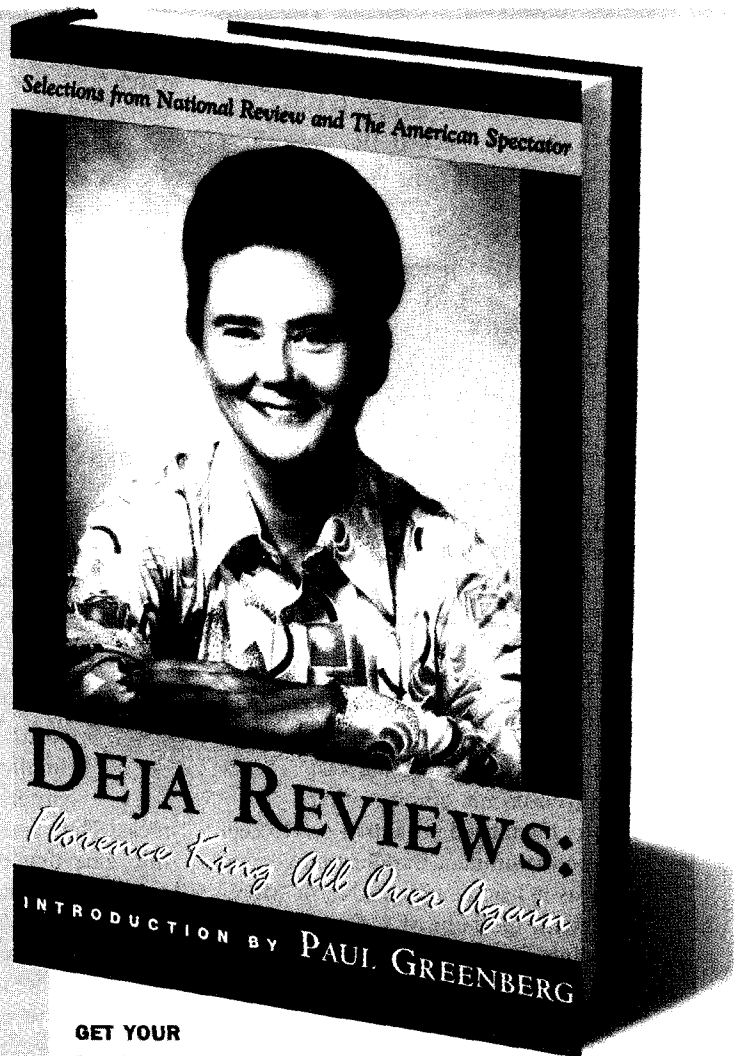
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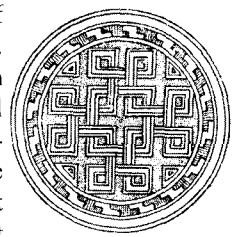
commitment of U.S. combat forces in 1965. He considers the key assertions that undergird the orthodox interpretation of events, and shows their weaknesses, if not outright inaccuracies. The story focuses on Ngo Dinh Diem, the first president of the Republic of Vietnam, who came to power (as prime minister) in 1954. The U.S.-backed 1963 coup that resulted in Diem's death was by most accounts the watershed event in the history of the war; it led inexorably to the large-scale commitment of U.S. ground forces two years later.

The orthodox histories present Diem as a clueless tyrant who was losing control of the country—as a Catholic aloofly ruling a land of Buddhists, influenced by the Marie Antoinette–like attitude of his sister-in-law Madame Nhu. Moyar convincingly argues that this depiction of Diem is false, the product of U.S. press bias and the cultural illiteracy of Henry Cabot Lodge Jr., the U.S. ambassador to Vietnam. Diem was in no wise an ineffectual leader. Unlike those who followed him, he was able to make order. Diem neutralized the vast organized-crime empires that initially threatened his authority. He kept a lid on the militant Buddhist movement that was in league with the North. Moreover, with the help of U.S. advisers—including former OSS operative Edward Lansdale and Lt. Gen. Samuel "Hanging Sam" Williams—he was able to mount an effective campaign to diminish the influence of the Communists in the South. Internal Communist-party documents from the North show that the party suffered massive defections and defeats in the late 1950s, in some areas losing 90 percent of its cadres. Diem's success was no secret; in 1959 the *New York Times* dubbed his rule since 1954 "a five-year miracle."



By then Diem was at his zenith. In 1960 Ho Chi Minh, frustrated at the failure of the party to foment an uprising in the South, declared a renewed armed struggle and began dispatching waves of soldiers and supplies southward. Diem's internal opponents were given new confidence. When Lodge arrived, he took an instant dislike to Diem, primarily because Lodge thought he knew better how to run South Vietnam, and Diem had the temerity to think otherwise. The U.S. pushed Diem to make conciliatory gestures to various protest groups, particularly the Buddhists, which played into the hands of the Communists. A noteworthy State Department cable from this period observed that one of Diem's concessions "appears to have had no effect on militants." In fact, Diem's U.S.-mandated acts of conciliation had emboldened his enemies, since they read compromise as weakness. This contributed to the self-reinforcing story line that led to the coup—fear of losing control of the situation in South Vietnam on the part of those who did not know how to keep order led them to hobble the one man who did. Increasing disorder fed Lodge's propensity to micromanage, which stiffened Diem's resistance. He was finally removed for not being the puppet ruler his adversaries accused him of being.

One very effective enemy psychological operation was the use of Buddhist demonstrators. Diem, a Catholic, was charged with oppressing the more numerous Buddhists. Moreover, with their exotic robes and regalia the Buddhists were well suited to garnering the attentions of the press. They presented an attractive story line, one that played to the American sense of religious freedom and fair play. For example, when Diem sought to close some Buddhist pagodas that had become subversive headquarters, it raised the same kinds of concerns one hears when contemporary authorities scrutinize the similar abuse of mosques.

The Buddhists were portrayed as well-intentioned reformers with no ties to the Communists, a notion central to the orthodox critique of Diem; but the most important of the militant Buddhist leaders, Tri Quang, was the brother of the North Vietnamese Communist official in charge of subversion in the South. Many of the protesters were Communist provocateurs who had simply shaved their heads and donned saffron robes.

A key contributor to the downfall of the regime was anti-Diem press coverage, the type written by Stanley Karnow, David Halberstam, and Neil Sheehan, among others. One might think that reporters who spent their time covering a country from the inside might be counted on to offer significant insights, but a congressional fact-finding mission in 1963 found the in-country American reporters to be "arrogant, emotional, unobjective, and ill-informed." Karnow, Halberstam, and Sheehan all relied a great deal on a Vietnamese journalist named Pham Xuan An, a stringer for Reuters. He helped the journalists interpret political events, always in a light unfavorable to Diem. The Americans did not know that Pham was a Communist agent who had been instructed by the party to become a journalist in order to influence Western media views of Vietnam. (Today, many news services rely on Iraqi stringers, and it is common practice for insurgents and their sympathizers to produce staged videos and concoct anti-Coalition stories to feed to the credulous Westerners. One example is Bilal Hussein, an AP photographer who is said to have strong insurgent ties and was taken into custody in a terrorist safe house.)

Moyar is sympathetic to President Kennedy, downplaying his desire for and knowledge of the coup, and placing most of the blame on Lodge, who was pursuing a private vendetta. The coup was generally hailed by the liberal establishment: The *New York Times* called it "inevitable . . . and highly desirable." But Moyar argues (and even some orthodox historians agree) that the coup was a momentous blunder. It ushered in a series of weak governments, which in turn emboldened Hanoi to make a major push toward victory. Moyar takes effective aim at the orthodox argument that the August 1964 Tonkin Gulf incident was engineered by Lyndon Johnson as an excuse to pursue escalation in Vietnam. In fact, at the time, LBJ was criticized for not responding vigorously enough, and the first large-scale U.S. combat actions did not take place until the summer of 1965, a year after Tonkin.

Johnson himself said, as early as April 1965, that "our restraint [after the Tonkin Gulf incident] was viewed as weakness; our desire to limit conflict was viewed as prelude to our surrender." But he did not internalize this lesson, and the use of "graduated force" in Vietnam, which was intended to convey U.S. resolve, had the opposite effect. This is a common critique in military circles, credited to Harry Summers. The proper response to provo-

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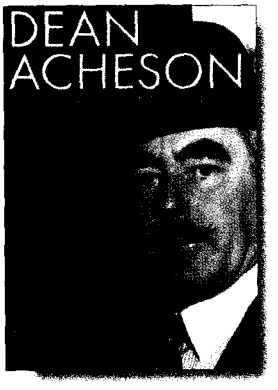
cation is not to dole out force in small doses; rather, it is to employ the traditional American way of war, sudden, unrestrained violence in pursuit of total victory. Where Americans have fought wars that way, we have won. Where we have not, we have lost. The accepted wisdom in the Vietnam period was that had the U.S. extended the ground war to the North (as many military leaders wanted), China would have intervened, leading to a second Korean War. Moyar notes that newly obtained Chinese sources fail to support this notion. One might add that the "Second Korean War" scenario looks pretty good compared with what actually happened, since in Korea we suffered two-thirds the casualties of Vietnam (killed and wounded), and we maintained the South's freedom.

Throughout the book Moyar takes up the contentions that form the bulwark of the orthodox interpretation. Would JFK have withdrawn from Vietnam had he lived? No, if anything he would have escalated the American commitment. Was Ho Chi Minh just a nationalist leader seeking the peaceful reunification of his country? No, he was a hard-core Leninist who sought to extend his rule as far as it would go, whether the people he ruled wanted it or not. The book is meticulously documented; it draws on the substantial U.S. documentary record of the war, bringing fresh perspectives to familiar evidence. Moyar augments and supports his analysis with extensive use of North Vietnamese archival material, most of which was unavailable to the orthodox historians of the 1970s and '80s.

In sum, *Triumph Forsaken* is an important book—not only as an interpretation of the Vietnam War, but also as a cautionary tale for anyone tempted to believe that the culture of the New England town meeting can be easily exported and take root overnight in new soil. The U.S. tried to force too much, too fast, on South Vietnam. We wanted American-style democracy to flourish in a culture that could not sustain it; we wanted a free and independent South Vietnamese government that would do what it was told. By 1965 we had taken full ownership of a wrecked system, prompting President Johnson to complain: "I can't get out. I can't finish it with what I have got. And I don't know what the hell to do!" **NR**

The Wise Man



Dean Acheson: A Life in the Cold War, by Robert L. Beisner (Oxford, 832 pp., $35)

MICHAEL KNOX BERAN

When I was a student at Groton in the 1980s, after the Old Boys' network had been swamped by the meritocracy, there was a palpable nostalgia for the good old days, when graduates could aspire to become Wise Men after the fashion of Averell Harriman, Sumner Welles, and McGeorge Bundy. Dean Acheson was the most remarkable of this class of leaders; his wit and intellect placed him above most of the others who affected a style of high breeding on the English model. Yet if Acheson was superior to his caste, he bore its distinctive marks, and it is not easy—perhaps it is not profitable—to consider him merely as an individual. In assessing the virtues of the man one is almost bound to consider the characteristics of the type.

The materials for a reconsideration of Acheson have been assembled by Robert L. Beisner in *Dean Acheson: A Life in the Cold War*, an excellent though exhausting study of the statesman's career. After graduating from Yale in 1915, Acheson ran the *cursus honorum*: He studied law at Harvard, clerked for Justice Brandeis, and entered public service as under secretary of the treasury in 1933. He soon got into a row with Franklin Roosevelt, who had been eleven years ahead of him at Groton, over a question of executive power. Acheson shortly thereafter resigned, but he found, when he returned to private practice, that he missed the stimulant of power.

Ambition is a winding stair, and Acheson was determined to rise. But he was not without principles. His political inspirations, like his hereditary connections (his father was an Anglican bishop), were largely English. England had in the 19th century "been almost the lungs of world trade," Acheson said: It had established the "fabric" of the free world. He attributed the rise of totalitarian regimes in the 1930s, Beisner writes, to the "breakdown of vital banking and diplomatic mechanisms centered in the United Kingdom." An "open world economy" was, Acheson argued, the only alternative to "controlled, autarkic" systems that "would completely change our Constitution, our relations to property, human liberty, our very conception of law." An Anglo-American to the core, Acheson had no sympathy for the demotic forms of German romanticism—the Bismarckian *Wohlfahrtstaat* (welfare state) and the Marxian commune—that seduced so many intellectuals of his generation.

In spite of these free-state sympathies, Acheson was slow to perceive the Soviet threat after he became under secretary of state in 1945. Truman, Beisner writes, "became a dedicated Cold Warrior before Acheson, who for a year or so after World War II remained less worried about Soviet machinations." Not until the Soviet–Turkish crisis in the summer of 1946 did Acheson move "tightly within the Cold War consensus" that Churchill and Truman fostered. When, however, he accepted the tonsure, he proved a zealous convert, and was instrumental in formulating the Truman Doctrine. America and Russia, Acheson said, stood like Rome and Carthage, "divided by an unbridgeable ideological chasm." The United States was fighting for its "whole way of life"; if freedom were to prevail, said Truman, America must "support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures." Greece and Turkey

Mr. Beran is the author most recently of *Jefferson's Demons: Portrait of a Restless Mind.*

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were saved, and the Marshall Plan and NATO followed, preserving the liberties of Western Europe.

In 1949 Acheson succeeded George C. Marshall as secretary of state. "You know," Truman said when he offered him the job, "twenty guys would make a better secretary of state than you, but I don't know them. I know you." In retrospect the selection of the architect of the Truman Doctrine seems an inspired one, but at the time there was much unhappiness. Half a century later, supporters of President Bush argue that his foreign policy is faithful to the Truman Doctrine, with its muscular defense of freedom. But in the 1940s many red-staters were skeptical of Acheson, the man who designed the Doctrine. "I'm tired of hearing about you and Harvard and Yale and that you're witty," former congressman Maury Maverick of Texas lectured him. "I've never heard you say anything funny. . . . [If Harold Ickes] got caught in a whorehouse at 3 A.M. killing a woman, a lot of people would bail him out. But not you, you've got no friends."

The tension between Acheson and those whom he called the "primitives" was depicted, then and later, as a conflict between patrician style and the boorish mores of the heartland. Acheson, Alistair Cooke said, was a "six-foot-two Velásquez grandee" disguised in tweeds. He preferred *bocce* (Italian lawn bowling) to baseball, and turned down tickets to the World Series. The highbrows relished the elegance of the performance, the rococo sarcasms, the bespoke suits, the Guards' moustache; the *Volk*, they supposed, were too stupid to understand it. The Neanderthals probably thought anyone who wore candy-striped shirts was a pinko at heart.

The mandarins portrayed the antagonism as stylistic, but Beisner, probing deeper, uncovers the real problem, one that went beyond style, went beyond even "Who lost China?" name-calling. Acheson's defense of Alger Hiss provides the clue. "I do not intend to turn my back upon Alger Hiss," Acheson told a press conference after Hiss's conviction in January 1950; and he cited the Sermon on the Mount. So strongly did he feel about the matter that he was willing to resign over it; Truman however kept him on, even though he privately said that the "s.o.b." Hiss was "guilty as hell."

Acheson saw the same intelligence Truman saw; he knew how damning the case was. Joseph Alsop, initially a Hiss defender, changed his mind after a conversation with Acheson: "It was perfectly obvious that Dean thought that Hiss was guilty, or had been guilty." But Acheson preferred to overlook the evidence and call the case a "mystery." He "could not believe," Beisner writes, "that the man he knew would do what had been charged, yet he granted the evidence indicated otherwise." Acheson gave Hiss the benefit of a doubt he would not have extended to others precisely because the accused was one of his kind—a protégé of Felix Frankfurter; a scholar who had clerked for Justice Holmes; the brother of one of his own law partners, Donald Hiss, who was "one of the greatest friends" he had. Beisner persuasively argues that Acheson's decision to defend Hiss was influenced by "an unacknowledged, class-based view that his opponents—and Hiss's—were less desirable people" who acted out of plebeian malice and Nietzschean *ressentiment* against their betters.

Acheson recoiled in horror from the breakdown of order in which the liberal revolution culminated—he might have been the first neocon.

The belief in the unassailable virtue of one's type is always a sign of corruption of spirit. The unwillingness to subject one's own comrades to rules that apply to everybody else is always a sign of arrogance. Acheson's Sermon on the Mount might have been convincing had he applied the charitable teachings evenly—but he did not. He would not beat "a guy who's down." Yet he dismissed Whittaker Chambers, who had been driven to attempt suicide, as probably a "crackpot."

Acheson's defense of Hiss foreshadowed the hauteur and moral softening that would lead to the collapse of the patriciate. The controversy that resulted was not an instance of the malignant herd failing to comprehend one of its superiors in wisdom and virtue; it was a case of ordinary Americans understanding all too well that a powerful class had become untethered from its moorings. Acheson himself, though he never changed his mind about Hiss, would in time become disenchanted with the implications of his leniency towards Hiss. It reeked of *bien-pensant* liberalism, which he came to despise. He recoiled in horror from the breakdown of order in which the liberal revolution culminated—he might have been the first neocon. Acheson rallied to his class to defend Hiss, but he lived to see his own friends repudiate him, or at least what he stood for. He was one of the few patricians to remain a Cold Warrior, and to the end he advocated massive buildups of conventional armaments; the statesman he most nearly resembled in this respect, Beisner argues, was Ronald Reagan. Yet in refusing to condemn Hiss, Acheson demonstrated the very laxity that was the ruin of his class.

The drift of the elite did not go unnoticed at the time. The founder of this magazine, then a young man, drew the country's attention to the problem in his first book, *God and Man at Yale*. The embarrassments of the governing class must have been evident, too, to another young Yale man of that time, to whom every door in patrician New York was open. George H. W. Bush, eager to serve his country, declined to follow in the footsteps of Stimson and Harriman; he took his family to Texas.

In their 1986 book *The Wise Men*, Evan Thomas and Walter Isaacson wrote elegiacally of the passing of the Achesonian patricians. But the sentimentality was unjustified; America's is a perpetual story of collapsing aristocracies. A class grows up and performs useful service, becomes proud and arrogant, and ends by losing the confidence of the country. From the fall of the Federalists to the fall of the satraps of the network news–*New York Times–Washington Post* suzerainty, the one constant in our history is rebellion. Conservatives, beware. The conservative movement may well become the next establishment; the fate of the Achesonians might one day be our own. **NR**

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■ MUSIC ■

Working Classical

JAY NORDLINGER

We will glance at three composers, starting with one of the most successful of our time—indeed, of all time: Paul McCartney. Belonged to a British band, some years back. Composed such hits as "Penny Lane" and "Yesterday." For about 15 years, he has been messing with classical music, or semi-classical music. In 1991, he wrote his *Liverpool Oratorio* (in collaboration with the composer Carl Davis). In 1999, he brought out an album with the endearing title *Working Classical*.

And his latest classical opus is *Ecce Cor Meum*. You will find it on a disc from EMI Classics. This, too, is an oratorio, and its title means "Behold My Heart." The work was commissioned by Magdalen College, Oxford, which wanted a piece for its new concert hall. The college president said he hoped for "a choral piece which could be sung by young people the world over—something equivalent to Handel's *Messiah*." Is that all?

McCartney has written a little essay for the CD's booklet, and it is absolutely charming. He says that writing the oratorio "was a great learning experience for me." He has never had a lesson in composition, he explains, and has had to figure everything out for himself. But he trusts in his talent, his "subconscious."

By the way, do you know the famous tale about Gershwin and Ravel? Gershwin cables Ravel, asking for composition lessons. Ravel answers, "How much money did you make last year?" Gershwin replies, "A million dollars." Ravel cables, "May I have lessons from you?"

Ecce Cor Meum is in five sections, and it involves large forces: an orchestra, a choir, a children's choir, a solo soprano, and an organ. The texts are in English and Latin, though mostly in English. McCartney wrote these, as well as the music. The texts are simple, along the lines of "Although life sometimes is hard, we still pull through."

Another essay in the booklet—not by McCartney, but quoting him—makes clear that the composer is *spiritual*, not *religious*. We must banish all thoughts of religion, which reeks of "my god's better than yours," according to Paul. (McCartney, I mean, not the Bible's Paul.) "Religion, the way I was taught it, had a lot of uncomfortable things in it," says the composer. And *Ecce Cor Meum* is not uncomfortable.

The music, like the words, is simple. It is often chipper, bright, and pretty. "Pretty" is a terrible putdown in most critics' vocabulary, but not in mine, necessarily. And McCartney undeniably knows how to write a melody. He has said, "I always feel the ability to sit down anywhere, anytime, and craft a melody"—lucky guy.

And yet the oratorio sometimes becomes insipid and cloying—a little Muzak-like. And the last section, in particular, features some very ill-advised composing. A madman-at-the-organ explosion is ridiculous. McCartney commits (unintentional) parody here. And when he at last ends the oratorio, he does so pompously, bangingly, losing his sweet gift.

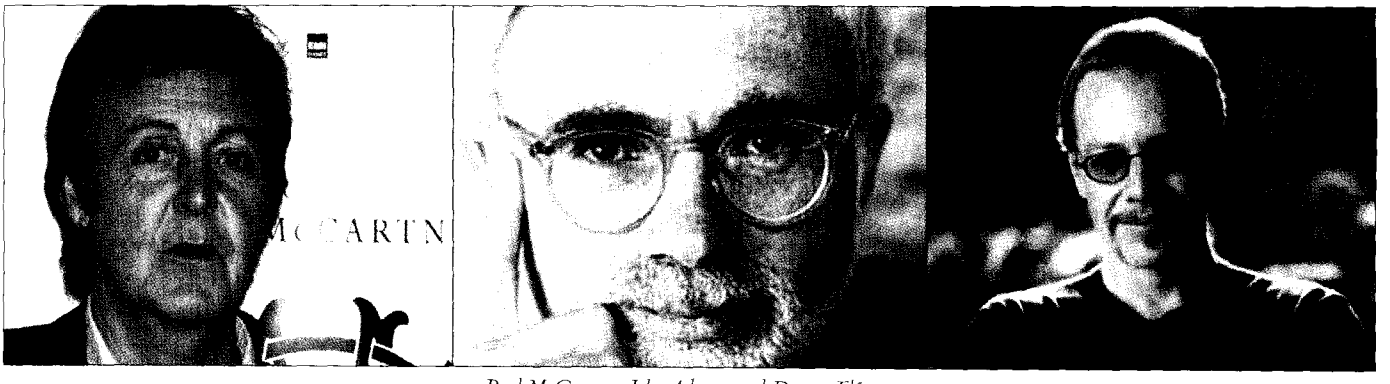
But the work, as a whole, has a sincerity about it—an innocence, a freedom from guile—that cannot be gainsaid. McCartney may lack sophistication, but he also lacks pretension. He has found a way to blend the popular and the classical. Other British composers have done this, too: I think of Rachel Portman and Karl Jenkins. You could even say that these people make up a school.

A friend of mine pointed out that, of the four Beatles, Paul was the most interested in the avant-garde—and that, despite this, *Ecce Cor Meum* could have been written before 1900. That may be. But Paul's devotion to beauty is refreshing, and although he is no Handel (of course), wouldn't you like to have written "Penny Lane"? I would.

■ There is no more celebrated classical composer today than John Adams, brought up in New England, long resident in the San Francisco Bay area. New York's Lincoln Center devoted an entire festival to him. The conductor Marin Alsop called him the Beethoven of our times. That is quite a designation to lay on someone.

A new album from Nonesuch gives us two Adams works, both from 2003: *The Dharma at Big Sur* and *My Father Knew Charles Ives*. The former combines many of Adams's interests, or passions, including California, Buddhism, and Jack Kerouac. (Kerouac, recall, wrote *The Dharma Bums* and *Big Sur*, among other books.) Indeed, Adams has referred to this piece as a "concerto after Kerouac." It is scored for electric violin and orchestra, and has two movements: "A New Day" and "Sri Moonshine."

As you have divined—if you didn't know it already—Adams is a New Age man. And *The Dharma at Big Sur*, of course, is a New Age piece. It invites you to "lie back and see the colors," as they said in the '70s. But it is not merely psychedelic. It turns jazzy and riffy. And although the piece can strike you as so much noodling, instead of disciplined com-



Paul McCartney, John Adams, and Danny Elfman

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posing, it builds excitingly, no question. Adams knows what he is doing.

Frankly, this is the kind of music you have to give in to. You simply embrace it—surrender to it, *groove* to it—or you don't. And if you don't: You will want to turn to some other CD.

Adams's father did not know Charles Ives, actually—but it's a catchy title anyway. Adams's father was, like Ives, a New Englander, a businessman, and a musician: He played the clarinet and saxophone in a variety of bands and orchestras. Adams has called *My Father Knew Charles Ives* "musical autobiography" and "an homage and encomium to a composer whose influence on me has been huge."

Incidentally, the composer has a very New England, as well as a very presidential, name: John Coolidge Adams.

My Father Knew Charles Ives is a three-movement work for orchestra. Those movements are "Concord," "The Lake," and "The Mountain." We are meant to think of Ives's *Three Places in New England*, and we might also think of William Schuman's *New England Triptych*. For some reason, New England things come in threes.

"Concord," particularly, has Ives written all over it, with sounds of the campgrounds, and tunes laid on top of one another. It is powerfully American. "The Lake" is mysterious, even mystical, and "The Mountain" is mystical too, although grander and more energetic. These are tone paintings of a high order.

So, Adams has both coasts covered, and he has the full attention of the classical-music world. Who says that the contemporary composer is always and ignominiously ignored?

■ Danny Elfman has made a killing in films, and also in television. He wrote the scores to *Batman*, *Spider-Man*, and lots of other flicks. He has often worked with the director Tim Burton, king of weird. Elfman, too, is a king of weird, musical realm. In television, he is best known for the theme to *The Simpsons*, a little composition fixed in the brains of countless Americans.

His first piece of concert music is *Serenada Schizophrana*, available from Sony Classical. It was commissioned by the American Composers Orchestra and premiered last year. As Elfman says, he had "always had visuals to drive my orchestral music," but not this time. And, indeed, *SS* often sounds like a score in search of visuals. In the end, it was used in the IMAX movie *Deep Sea 3D*.

The music is true to its title—capricious and odd—and comes in seven movements. These, too, have cute, whimsical titles, such as "Bells and Whistles." The music is playful, quirky, cracked—Tim Burton-esque, maybe. It tends to be nervous, manic, drugged up. And Elfman has a definite musical signature, here and in other scores: spooky music that runs; music that says, "Let's get going," or, "We're in some danger"; music that goes *churna-churna-churna*.

In this "serenade," Elfman repeats himself, having learned from the minimalists, whom he admires, and having learned perhaps too much. But his musical sense usually rescues him. At one point, he busts out into song—a mad, swirling song, in Spanish. This is loco, but well-nigh irresistible.

Elfman is clearly a talent, and if he is mainly a composer for movies and TV, so what? One of my favorite comments of all time comes from Leonard Bernstein, who said that he would have given five years of his life to have written Sousa's great march, *The Stars and Stripes Forever*. How much time would you give to have written the theme to *The Simpsons*? At least a long weekend, I imagine. **NR**

■ FILM ■

Saint Clint

ROSS DOUTHAT

By now almost everyone knows the story. Once upon a time Clint Eastwood made brutal, violent, and implicitly right-wing movies like *Dirty Harry*. Now he makes brutal, violent, *complicated* movies like *Unforgiven* and *Mystic River* and *Million Dollar Baby*—movies that subvert America's sunny ideas about itself; movies that demythologize our culture of violence; movies that win Academy Awards. He used to be Harry Callahan, doling out vigilante justice from the barrel of a gun; now he's Saint Clint, teaching us about the costs of bloodshed.

This means that the reviews of Eastwood's films more or less write themselves. Quick, which one did the *New York Times* call "a parable of incurable trauma, in which violence begets more violence and the primal violation of innocence can never be set right"? Which was hailed, by the same paper, for its vision of the world as "a violent and unforgiving place, in which the only

WHAT WICKED THING

What wicked thing could I have ever done—
what error, what false motive, what mistake
in stupid enthusiasm or in fun
with malice aforethought, that my heart must break?
The dogs in every neighbor's yard, despite
the aching head, will bark, the kitten scratch
and roam again at will, until I light—
like the Hans Christian waif—my last good match.
And all of it, yet nothing, will have led
you here to me. By dusk, I shall be left
as another bride who cannot find her bed,
another orphan early on bereft,
to wonder what to eat, or where to sleep,
but tasting never, counting mental sheep.

—JENNIFER REESER

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protections against nihilism are the professional regulation of brutality . . . and the mutual obligations of friendship"? Which was praised by *New York* magazine for being designed to make "violence, even in self-defense, seem soul-killing, and to expose the gulf between reality and myth"?

The answers, in order, are *Mystic River*, *Million Dollar Baby*, and this fall's *Flags of Our Fathers*, Eastwood's adaptation of the bestseller about the Marines who raised the iconic flag on Iwo Jima. *Flags* is both a war and a postwar movie: It's *The Longest Day* meets *The Best Years of Our Lives*, framed by the kind of encounters with Greatest Generation veterans that Steven Spielberg pioneered, to mawkish effect, in *Saving Private Ryan*. In the present day, the son of John Bradley, a Marine medic and one of the six flag-raisers, interviews his late father's comrades. In flashback, Bradley himself (a stoic Ryan Phillippe) and the two other flag-raisers who survived the battle (Rene Gagnon, played with a chipper smirk by Jesse Bradford, and a weepy Adam Beach as Ira Hayes, the alcoholic Pima Indian immortalized by Johnny Cash's "Ballad of Ira Hayes") are paraded around the United States to sell the war bonds that keep the struggle in the Pacific going. And then in *another* flashback, the Marines fight their way up Mount Suribachi and plant a flag—which is promptly claimed by the secretary of the Navy, leading to a second flag-planting and the famous photograph that followed.

Sadly, the narrative isn't nearly as clean as even this messy summary makes it sound. The late-in-life Eastwood has three main tricks as a director—he shoots every scene in a mournful palette; he allows his actors to emote so long as they play up the anguish; and he favors stories in which human life seems little more than an accretion of unfortunate events. Given great actors and a claustrophobic canvas, this technique can feel like a bleak kind of genius, even if both *Mystic River* and *Million Dollar Baby* shaded into an unpleasant upper-class voyeurism—a chance for a millionaire director and his Bobo audience to wallow in the miseries of working-class life. But *Flags of Our Fathers* is too big and clumsy for Eastwood's bag of tricks to work. Its competing narratives talk over one another, and its actors aren't impressive enough to carry the audience through the movie's contradictions.

The Iwo Jima scenes succeed well enough: Eastwood films the island as a bombed-out moonscape, washed in chalk and charcoal, and his fatalist aesthetic is perfect for the randomness of combat. The camera captures the carnage without being overwhelmed by it, and we have enough distance to appreciate the soldiers' heroism—not because they're doing extraordinary things, but because they're doing the ordinary, following orders and operating machinery and climbing hills, in a world where life's arbitrariness is exaggerated to the point of madness.

Flags of Our Fathers is too big and clumsy for Eastwood's bag of tricks to work.

The war itself, as Eastwood portrays it, is the only commentary on war the movie needs. But instead *Flags of Our Fathers* shuttles back and forth between Iwo Jima and the bond drive, the better to contrast the horror of combat with the kitsch of the home front. The point of these scenes is at once obvious (war is hell, and nobody at home knows it) and obscure (should the government *not* have sold war bonds?), and the actors don't give us any purchase: Phillippe glowers, Bradford mugs, and Beach sobs and drinks, drinks and sobs. And then, as if the studio—or maybe screenwriter Paul Haggis, he of bogus-uplift films like *Crash*—reminded Eastwood that this a Greatest Generation flick, dammit, the movie stops complicating the war effort and starts elegizing it, with sensitive boomers sobbing over their World War II vet dad.

The result is a film that's at war with itself—part melodrama and part docudrama, minimalist and bloated all at once. It's an Eastwood effort, so the critics love it, but those seeking a movie that actually says "something new and urgent about the uses of war and of the men who fight," as the *Times*'s inevitable rave puts it, are better off looking elsewhere. **NR**

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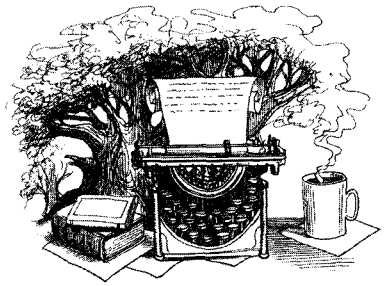
■ COUNTRY LIFE ■

Straight Shooting



RICHARD BROOKHISER

It is a convention of popular art that animals welcome their own demise. The merry grilling pig decorates many a rib shack. Now is the time of year in my valley when bars, diners, and motels sprout orange banners, decorated with buck heads, and the message: WELCOME HUNTERS.

In *The Pioneers*, by James Fenimore Cooper, Natty Bumppo and Chingachgook, aging icons of the French and Indian Wars, get in trouble in the 1790s for taking a deer out of season. Their plight symbolizes the grave march of civilization. Two hundred plus years later, civilization has marched on, with a web of hunting regulations. In my county big game may be taken with bow, muzzleloader, handgun, shotgun, or rifle. Certain subspecies of these weapons are off limits—no arrow, for instance, may have barbs. Dates and bags are prescribed (hunters with bows and muzzleloaders get a head start and a late finish, to offset anachronism). Close to New York's major cities your options diminish. In the five boroughs no hunting of any kind is permitted, though people use handguns to hunt one another.

Big game in my county is deer and bear. Deer are ubiquitous. I find their scat in the morning, I see the pressed grass where they have paused during the night; they have a favorite path, down the hill from the hemlocks, through a clump of mountain laurel, that you can just make out; it is where your feet naturally go if you are coming downhill. I have seen only one bear. My wife and I were by the stream one day when she said, "Rick, there's a bear." So there was, ten feet away. It was four to five feet long, perhaps 300 pounds: not the nemesis of Grizzly Man, but it could ruin your day. So we walked, with due deliberation, to the house. We never had sight or sign of it again, so it must have been passing through. A few years ago, a bear passed in front of a local woman hunting deer. It was in season, she had a permit, so she took him down.

The local paper ran a picture of hunter and quarry, with a light feminist spin. This brought an enraged letter, demanding to know how anyone could celebrate slaughtering God's creatures. This in turn brought a snort from a lifer, of the sort who normally does not write letters, asking rude questions about the protester's general knowledge of the world. As the valley fills up with second-homers from the city, there are more people like the first letter-writer. I can't agree, considering how many hunters surround me. At night I hear coyotes, doing the cowboy howl or ghastly rapid yips. Like most predators, they prefer the small, the weak, and the old; deer can fill all those niches. The barred owls, shouting "Who cooks for you?" are unearthly to us; to voles they are death. There are fishers in my neighborhood, a creature related to weasels and minks, but bigger. Their specialty victim, which only they can hunt, is the porcupine. They drive it to bury its face against a tree trunk, spreading its quills behind. Then the fisher strikes down from above and eats its face. Fishers are quite handsome. When I moved in, there were deer remains in an old sheep pen in the woods—a leg bone, a skull with teeth and antlers. Something had run it to earth. As the years passed the bones wore away like Richard Eberhart's groundhog.

Over the hill there is a gun club. Some days the barrage goes from dawn to dusk. It is a sound so familiar, like jackhammers in the city, that I hear it without acknowledgment.

Over the hill there is a gun club. Some days the barrage goes from dawn to dusk. It is a sound so familiar, like jackhammers in the city, that I hear it without acknowledgment. On the great artery of the valley, a two-lane state road, a pair of lesbians opened a gun shop. They too had their picture in the paper, pistols cocked. Their slogan is "Pray for Peace, Dress for War." It would be easy to become a hunter here. Even Mr. Jefferson encourages me, for shooting, he wrote, "gives a moderate exercise to the body," and "boldness, enterprise and independence to the mind. . . . Let your gun, therefore, be the constant companion of your walks." I came closest to taking the plunge after seeing a raccoon in the early stages of rabies; he was determined, disheveled, and slightly unsteady, a drunk at a party. I went out and bought a single-shot .410, in case his friends showed up. But, although I do not disapprove, I will not take it up. There are some habits that must be acquired, and instincts that must be awakened, early in life. A friend, born and raised here, put it simply: "Cleaning a deer is a messy job." So I let one man hunt my land. He gives us venison every year to return the favor, but it is never mine. The day the bows and muzzleloaders are free to take them, the deer vanish into thin air, returning only at the onset of winter. The pattern repeats itself throughout the valley, the county, and the country. They used to close the schools the day hunting season opened; now hunting magazines carry ads for Viagra.

It is a shame that people like me are so common. The white-tailed deer, once a noble animal, suffers from overpopulation. In mating season (November) they are run down by cars. In winter, they browse everything, then starve. I have had them come, famished, almost to the front door; if I had had dried corn, I could have fed them by hand.

My house began as a hunter's cabin in 1941. Up the road, there is another, a cabin still, protected by a NO TRESPASSING sign. A yard sale on Upper Cherrytown Road this summer turned out to be someone selling the contents of a store for hunters, long defunct. It stank of must, and there was very little left, except for an old game map on the wall. **NR**

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WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

Simple Moral Arithmetic

NEW YORK, OCTOBER 17

SOME years ago, at the outset of the age of e-mail, I was lunching with three or four media moguls, and the discussion turned to security. Specifically, how to guard A from B's gaining access to A's correspondence. The late A. M. Rosenthal, at that time the executive editor of the *New York Times*, told how he had addressed the problem. "I called in the senior staff and said, Look, we don't read each other's mail, do we? Well, for the same reason we don't do that, we will not look at other people's e-mail."

This seemed to us, for a brief moment, kindergarten moralizing. But there was silence at the table as we recognized that Rosenthal had said everything that needed to be said on the question. If it is wrong to read other people's mail, it is wrong to read that mail in whatever form it comes in, and transmissions by Internet are no exception.

That moral question is easily answered if you simply stare it in the face, as are many others. But our failure to do so results in acts of moral default which somehow go on. The most spectacular recent episode of this is the matter of Dr. William McGuire, of the UnitedHealth Group.

The device he used is very tempting. The executive asks for, and receives in his package of compensation, stock options on the company he goes to work for, such options giving him the right to purchase shares at the value they sold for on a given date.

Let us say that the hypothetical company shows a rise in the value of its securities, which is most generally the case in successful companies. The trick is to exercise an option granted on a date when the stock sold at a lower price than it is selling for today. The point at issue is whether the dating was by happenstance, or whether an option was deliberately written to coincide with downward fluctuations in the share price.

That practice is called "backdating."

An exposé in the *Wall Street Journal* last March drew attention to the extraordinary skill of UnitedHealth personnel, most notably the CEO, Dr. McGuire, in acquiring options effective as of the date in the quarter in which the stock price was lowest. The practice resulted in enormous gains for Dr. McGuire, thanks to his uncanny ability to guess when the stock would hit the low.

The *Journal* article caught, of course, the attention of the Securities and Exchange Commission, which waded into the picture illuminating the details of Dr. McGuire's swinging machinations.

His initial defense was that it was sheer chance that his options had been written on the days when the stock was lowest. This explanation caused a great laugh, which was given a statistical life when the *Wall Street Journal* people ran it through the probabilities wringer. The odds that Dr. McGuire would have had the success he had purely by luck were 1 in 300 billion. That would have called for the skills of a necromancer. McGuire's background was as a pulmonologist.

Two avenues are left to explore. The first is how to return to the shareholders the money the magician took, for himself and his employees, from the shareholders' pool. That figure has not been published. But it has been revealed that the value of the doctor's extant options is $1.1 billion. Analysts say that if such options were honored and exercised, UnitedHealth would be turning over to the erstwhile CEO nearly 2 percent of the value of the entire company, which is estimated to be worth $66 billion.

That is now unlikely to happen. But the second avenue is whether this is purely a civil matter between Dr. McGuire and the shareholders, or whether any of this amounts to criminal activity. As yet unformulated is the final ruling of the SEC. At the end of that line, Dr. McGuire will learn whether he will spend the rest of his life in pleasure domes, or in Sing Sing.

Help for the Distressed

NEW YORK, OCTOBER 20

AT mighty events, little happenings can take on major life, as I was reminded on Thursday evening when I found my pants falling off. I was talking to a stranger dressed in white tie and tails, the uniform for dais guests. He beckoned to his wife, who quickly extended a maternal hand to my trousers at hip level.

The bustling room full of prominent guests at the 61st Alfred E. Smith Memorial Foundation Dinner at the Waldorf-Astoria busied themselves with animated conversation about other things than unruly pants. Dr. Kissinger was talking, and was talked to. Before long Governor Pataki materialized, as did Senators Schumer and Hillary. We learned that Cardinal Egan, the host, was forbidden by his doctors to climb the steps necessary to ascend to the dais, from which to address the 800 guests whose $1,000 contributions sustain so much of the health care undertaken by the archdiocese of New York.

There is a special snap to the Al Smith Dinner because it has for many years served as a required stop for anyone seeking to be president of the United States. The political heft of the Catholic Church in New York is reflected in the allure of the evening's speaker.

Only exceptionally is there more than one speaker. In 1960 there was high excitement at the dinner featuring John F. Kennedy and Richard M. Nixon, three weeks before Kennedy was elected president. In 1968 the card was truly comprehensive: President Johnson and two contenders for his office, Hubert Humphrey and Richard Nixon. On my right that night was New York earth-shaker Robert Moses. After Humphrey sat down, overextending by 20 minutes the 10 minutes he had been allotted, Moses leaned over to me with a whispered question: "What comes after a Saturday night speech by Hubert Humphrey?" My eyes betrayed that I didn't have the answer. Moses smiled and said, "Sunday."

The speaker on Thursday was NBC newscaster Brian Williams, but things were not going smoothly that night. I lost

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my pants, the cardinal couldn't climb up the stairs, and, as the assembly waited for Brian Williams to declare his candidacy for president, there was commotion at the end of the long dais. A guest had fainted.

Dr. Adler, health czar of the archdiocese, tended to Sen. John Marchi, the perennial New York legislator who succeeded me as Conservative party candidate for mayor of New York. His trouble was fleeting, but the rhythm of the evening was broken, and Williams never did come out with his platform for the presidency.

Many guests were there with lesser concerns. My own centered on my recalcitrant trousers. The chief steward of the hotel had asked a tall bishop at the other end of the room if by chance he had come with an extra belt in hand. Bishop Gerald Walsh answered yes, indeed he had: His own belt was no longer critical to maintaining his pants at the requisite altitude.

So the episcopal belt made its way to me. It wouldn't tighten far enough, and I asked someone I thought a hotel steward if he could contrive to puncture a hole an inch farther up. He came back in a few minutes with the fresh hole, and identified himself as the eye surgeon of the cardinal.

I donned the belt to shore up my situation, and got a lecture from a guest who tore himself away from Henry Kissinger to say to me, "Try suspenders"—which I have promised to do before I am dispatched to one of the nursing homes so caringly looked after on behalf of people who, earlier in life, have celebrated Al Smith's birthday by buying a ticket to the annual affair at the Waldorf.

Pelosi Ahead

NEW YORK, OCTOBER 24

EVERYBODY is predicting big gains for the Democrats in November. If they succeed in taking the House of Representatives, that means that Nancy Pelosi is in our future. There is a lot about her that is distinctive, notably that she would be the first woman serving as Speaker of the House, which incidentally would put her second, after the vice president, in line for the presidency. Exit Bush and Cheney simultaneously, enter President Nancy Pelosi, oh my God.

It's true, as she has several times said, that "people" don't know a great deal about her. Among other things, she serves the San Francisco constituency, which is happily unique. But her background is thoroughly political. Her father, Thomas D'Alesandro, was for many years the mayor of Baltimore, and one of her brothers also, though more briefly, served as mayor. The brief glimpses of Pelosi given on television recently show us one tough lady, but it pays for critics to remind themselves that she was overwhelmingly chosen as minority leader only four years ago. It is good fun to think that colleagues who'd have preferred someone else chose her for fear that otherwise she would train her unsparing eyes on them and hound them to death.

Her directness of speech was a subject Lesley Stahl of CBS's *60 Minutes* elected last week to emphasize, asking just how did she intend to achieve her goal of bringing civility back to Washington given the language she tends to use about Republicans. Pelosi, viewers were reminded, has called her GOP colleagues "immoral" and "corrupt," suggesting that they were backing a criminal enterprise. Stahl said: "I mean, you're one of the reasons we have to restore civility in the first place."

Pelosi raised her eyes in unconcern. "When I called them those names I was being gentle. There are much worse things I could have said about them."

Now that is a cute forensic technique. It has two effects. The first is to diminish the seriousness of the charges already leveled. The second is to awaken interest in the charges being held back in deference to civility. What are the Republicans actually conspiring to accomplish that is more grievous than the immorality and corruption they are already, according to Ms. Pelosi, bringing in through their criminal enterprise?

Ms. Stahl didn't ask the Democratic leader what exactly were the graver crimes she might have imputed to the Republicans. She turned instead to the problems raised by the need to associate with criminals: "If you're Speaker, I'm wondering how you'll work with [President Bush]." Pelosi had charged that Bush was "an incompetent leader." Stahl remarked that the mere "sound" of such words is disruptive: "It even stings to hear it now. I mean, obviously, the two of you are bound to get along just great."

Pelosi gave a fine answer. "We're professionals. You could go through a long list of things [Bush's] surrogates have said about me. I know they have to do what they have to do, and they know I have to do what I have to do. And what I have to do is make a distinction in the public that's between the Democrats and the Republicans in order to win. This isn't personal."

"It sounds personal."

"This isn't personal."

"[You say] he's incompetent—"

"Well, I think he is."

"Well *that's* personal."

"Well, I'm sorry, that's his problem."

"How does this raise the level of civility?" Stahl is yielding to despair on the point.

"Well, we're in a political debate here. We didn't come here to have a tea party together, and toss a coin to see who would win on an issue. I have very thick skin. I don't care what they say about me."

That is a very grand thing—to announce that the woman who may be the next Speaker of the House really doesn't care what is said about her. People who enter politics have to expect that there will be rough language ahead, used at their expense. It is so, also, for (most) writers and other public figures. But Pelosi is advertising an indifference to necessary elements of democratic life, and this takes her one step further than giving evidence that her skin is thick. It moves the public concern to the meaning of words. If we are trained to attach no meaning to words used by Democrats about Republicans, and the other way around, we debase not merely language, but ideals. If Republicans in Congress are engaged in immoral and corrupt practices, then they should be replaced. Or—the things they do should be given other names.

Speaker Pelosi will be heir to an important tradition, exercising an important role. She should not begin with this profession of utter indifference to the language used to describe what she does, and indeed to describe her.

—UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

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happy warrior

MARK STEYN

Looking Around

On the tomb of the great architect Sir Christopher Wren at St. Paul's Cathedral is a famous inscription: *Si monumentum requiris, circumspice*—"If you seek my monument, look around." Conversely, if you're seeking the tomb of Western civilization, look around at the monuments. Not the old ones to generals and potentates, but the new ones.

A year ago, London's mayor "Red Ken" Livingstone unveiled a new statue on the famous "empty plinth" in Trafalgar Square. Sharing the heart of the capital with King George IV, General Sir Charles Napier, and Major General Sir Henry Havelock these days is Alison Lapper, an armless woman heavily pregnant. At the unveiling, Miss Lapper said the new statue would force Britons to "confront their prejudices" about disability. As my old editor, Charles Moore, pointed out, Trafalgar Square already has a monument to persons who've overcome disability: the one-eyed, one-armed Admiral Lord Nelson, standing on his column, and no doubt amused by the modish posturing below.

Red Ken became weirdly obsessed, as is his wont, by the dead white males clogging up the square and was anxious to even up the score. He professed never to have heard of General Napier or General Havelock, which is a sad comment—not that he should be so ignorant, but that he should be so boastful of his ignorance. (NATIONAL REVIEW readers who wish to bring themselves up to speed on Sir Charles Napier will find him on page 193 of my new book.) So the point of the fourth plinth was to send a message that warmongering white males no longer had the square to themselves: The statue of Miss Lapper is a monument not to disability so much as to the psychological self-crippling to which so many Britons are prone.

Another monument: the Arizona 9/11 memorial. It is a remarkable sight. Five years after the slaughter of thousands of Americans, one had long ago given up all hope that the nation might rouse itself to erect, as James Lileks put it at National Review Online, "a classical memorial in the plaza with allegorical figures representing Sorrow and Resolve, and a fountain watched over by stern stone eagles." But, even so, the Arizona memorial is an almost parodic exercise in civilizational self-loathing, festooned in slogans that read like a brainstorming session for a Daily Kos publicity campaign: "You don't win battles of terrorism with more battles."

There was a man.

"Foreign-born Americans afraid." "Erroneous US airstrike kills 46 Uruzgan civilians." And this is the *official* state memorial. Governor Napolitano called it "great" and "honorable." It isn't. It's small and contemptible. Assuming it survives, future generations will stand before it and marvel—either that the United States is still around or that such an obviously deranged country even needed an enemy to lose to.

A third monument, a third country: France. This one was unveiled at the end of October in Clichy-sous-Bois. If that name rings a bell, it's the bell on the fire truck racing through the streets to douse the flaming Citroens and Renaults in last year's riots. They began when two of France's legions of—what's the word?—"youths" were fleeing the cops and decided to hide out in an electrical substation. Bad choice. They were electrocuted. Their fellow "youths" blamed the police and launched a three-week orgy of destruction. Now Clichy-sous-Bois has put up a monument to the unfortunate Zyed Benna and Bouna Traore. As in Arizona and London, this is an official memorial. That's to say, the mayor of Clichy-sous-Bois unveiled the monument to Messieurs Benna and Traore in the front of their school and then led a "silent march" to the substation where he laid a wreath commemorating their death—or, indeed, manslaughter, if some of the complaints against the pursuing gendarmes come off.

Now let's take it as read that the deceased were as they're portrayed—lovable rogues who were alienated only by the lack of employment opportunities, etc. Granted all that, is it still necessary to put up a formal monument to them? Weren't the thousands of press columns saying these riots were nothing to do with Islam and were all about the need for more public spending monument enough? Wasn't Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin's "raft of measures"—the creation of an anti-discrimination agency, 20,000 job contracts with local government agencies, an extra 100 million euros for community associations—monument enough? Weren't the French government's desperate entreaties to A-list imams to serve as interlocutors with the "youths" monument enough?

No, no, no. They had to go and build an actual monument.

America, Britain, and France are not peripheral members of the developed world but its heart. They're the West's three permanent representatives on the Security Council, the three nuclear powers. But if these monuments truly represent the spirit of each nation as those monuments to Nelson and Napier did in their day, then you would have to be an unusually optimistic sort to bet on the long-term prospects of all three countries. The poseur diversity of Trafalgar Square slips easily into the self-loathing of Arizona, and from there it's but a short step to the open appeasement in Clichy-sous-Bois. If you seek our monument, look around: We cannot state who we are, what we believe, why we fight. **NR**

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Relaxation therapy for your feet

Visco-elastic foam has changed the way people sleep, now it helps the way you walk.

by Leigh Ligon

My feet hurt! How many times have you heard *or* said that…standing in line at the grocery store or simply while doing daily routine tasks? I feel like the older I get the more my feet ache. I've tried elevating my feet, soaking them in a hot water and expensive massage therapy—but to no avail. That's why I'm so excited to tell you about my recent discovery—CLOUD 10 Slippers!

How did a NASA invention save my feet? From the moment I slipped them on, they molded to the shape of my feet like I had a custom fit pair of slippers made especially for me! The slipper's insole is made from visco-elastic memory foam originally created by NASA. This foam equalizes pressure, reduces stress and tension and provides incredible comfort.

According to the American Podiatric Medical Association, as people age, their feet tend to spread, and lose the fatty pads that cushion the bottom of the feet. Additional weight can affect the bone and ligament structure. These slippers mold to the contours of my feet through my body's heat and weight, literally cushioning every single step I take.

Technologically advanced slippers mold to the contours of your feet making each step feel like you're walking on Cloud 10!

Did you know that the average person takes 8,000 to 10,000 steps a day, which adds up to about 115,000 miles over a lifetime? That's enough to go around the circumference of the earth four times. No wonder we all have tired, aching feet.

I've heard about similar kinds of slippers, but I couldn't afford to spend nearly $70 a pair. The Cloud 10 Slippers were a much better fit for my budget. The outer material of these stylish slippers is beautiful tan faux suede and they feature a cozy, fleece-lined interior and collar to provide added warmth. The durable rubber sole is perfect for my quick trips outdoors to grab the morning paper.

❖ *Inner sole is constructed from visco-elastic memory foam*
❖ *Body heat molds foam to cushion feet for maximum support*
❖ *Super-soft, fleece lining provides added warmth*
❖ *Durable rubber sole—perfect for quick outdoor trips!*

If you have arthritic feet like I do, you suffer from inflammation and pain in your joints. Our feet have to last a lifetime and I've decided to stop neglecting the part of my body that keeps me mobile.

These slippers have a unisex design making them great for both men and women. I wear my Cloud 10 Slippers every chance I get and my feet have never felt so pampered.

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